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Michael Cohen prepares to testify before a House panel on Wednesday.

J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

HEATED HEARING

In explosive testimony amid GOP criticism, Trump's former lawyer calls him a 'con man' and 'cheat' and claims president had advance knowledge of WikiLeaks email dump

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Pentagon spent nearly \$8M to treat 1,500 transgender troops since 2016

By TOM VANDEN BROOK
USA Today

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has spent nearly \$8 million to treat more than 1,500 transgender troops since 2016, including 161 surgical procedures, according to data obtained by USA Today.

As of Feb. 1, 1,071 servicemembers have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps,

Coast Guard and Public Health Service on active duty and in the Reserve force.

Most of them are senior enlisted personnel, but there are 20 senior officers — majors and lieutenant commanders and higher — as well.

Overall, the troops represent a fraction of the total force of 2.1 million. The number of transgender troops serving who have not sought treatment through the military is not known.

Transgender troops and their medical and psychological treatment has been a flashpoint for controversy since President Donald Trump tweeted in July 2017 that he wanted to ban them from the military. In January, the question reached the Supreme Court, which ruled that a modified ban could take effect while lower court challenges continued.

On Wednesday, the House Armed Services Committee was to hear testimony on the

military's policy, which bans most troops with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

Democrats, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have blasted the Pentagon policy as bigoted. She invited transgender troops to Trump's State of the Union address this month.

Data on the population of transgender troops have been closely held at the Pentagon.

SEE TRANSGENDER ON PAGE 3

MILITARY

Potential Pentagon chief in precarious perch

By ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Patrick Shanahan, the former Boeing executive, was in a familiar place — aboard an airplane — when he got word of a bolt-from-the-blue political shot across his bow, an apparent blow to his chances of being nominated as the next secretary of defense.

Sen. James Inhofe, the White House-friendly Republican chairman of the committee that would pass judgment on the nomination, was being quoted in news reports as saying he didn't think Shanahan would get the nod, and that Shanahan lacked humility.

Within hours, the crisis passed as Inhofe backtracked, insisting he had not meant to say he had a problem with Shanahan. "I like the guy. I would support him" if nominated, Inhofe told The Associated Press.

The episode, which played out while Shanahan was flying from Baghdad to Brussels on his first trip abroad as the acting secretary of defense, highlights the precarious position he occupies while waiting for President Donald Trump to decide who he will nominate as successor to Jim Mattis, the retired Marine general who quit in December after



PABLO MARTINEZ/AP

Acting Secretary of Defense Pat Shanahan speaks to members of the media aboard a military plane prior to his arrival at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on Saturday.

nearly two years of leading the Pentagon.

With no other candidate emerging as the clear front-runner, expectations inside the Pentagon are that Shanahan will soon be nominated and that he likely would win Senate confirmation. He would be the first career defense industry executive to serve as defense secretary.

In the two months he has led the Pentagon, Shanahan has avoided public missteps while handling such politically sensitive issues as sending military reinforcements to the U.S.-Mexico border. Shanahan has a less defined track record on policy issues than Mattis, perhaps giving him a more friction-free start with Trump.

Shanahan, 56, grew up in Seattle. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical

engineering from the University of Washington and two advanced degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He joined Boeing in 1986, rose through its ranks and is credited with rescuing a troubled Dreamliner 787 program. He also led the company's missile defense and military helicopter programs.

Some have questioned whether Shanahan's background amounts to an inherent conflict of interest for a defense secretary presiding over a multibillion-dollar procurement budget. But Michael O'Hanlon, an analyst at the Brookings Institution, argues that experience in defense industry issues could work to Shanahan's benefit.

"We need a strong defense industrial base, and so anybody who is reflexively against his as-

sociation with industry needs to rethink how you build a strong military in a modern society like ours," O'Hanlon said.

"In the end, I don't expect that to be a huge sticking point" to Senate confirmation, should Shanahan get the nomination, O'Hanlon added.

Although a few members of the Senate have rhetorically roughed up Shanahan, he has not generated broad opposition during two months of auditioning for the nomination. Sen. Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican, has butted heads with Shanahan over the administration's Syria policy, but that confrontation quickly faded after the White House partially reversed course by agreeing to keep a few hundred troops in Syria rather than withdrawing all 2,000.

Sen. Joni Ernst, an Iowa Republican and a member of the Armed Services Committee, has publicly argued for Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson, a former congresswoman from New Mexico, to be defense secretary. Ernst told the AP that if Shanahan gets the nomination she would revisit his background "just to make sure there's no conflict of interest," calling herself undecided.

Sen. Deb Fischer, a Nebraska Republican, called Shanahan "very forthright" but would not say directly whether she thinks he should get the job.

Shanahan was the deputy secretary of defense during Mattis' two-year tenure. No one thought of him then as a potential No. 1; he had never previously served in government and carried little political sway in Washington or in foreign capitals.

Aides say that during his 17 months as deputy, Shanahan was deeply engaged in the full range of policy issues and briefed on military operations. He shares Mattis' conviction that the Pentagon needs to shift its focus from fighting insurgent wars to preparing for and deterring armed conflict with big powers like China.

Trump installed Shanahan as the acting secretary on Jan. 1 and has since spoken admirably of him.

This is only the third time in history that the Pentagon has been led by an acting chief. The last was William H. Taft, who served for two months in 1989 after President George H.W. Bush's first choice to be defense secretary, John Tower, became mired in controversy and ultimately failed to be confirmed by the Senate.

Presidents typically take pains to ensure the Pentagon is being run by a Senate-confirmed official, given the grave responsibilities that include sending young Americans into battle, ensuring the military is ready for extreme emergencies like nuclear war and managing overseas alliances that are central to U.S. security.

Trump seemed attracted to Shanahan partially for his work on one of the president's pet projects — creating a Space Force. He also has publicly lauded Shanahan's former employer, Boeing, builder of many of the military's most prominent aircraft.

Trump seemed to tire of Mattis' reputation as the administration's moderating influence on national security issues. But when Mattis quit, there was no sudden rush of candidates to fill his shoes.

Correction

A Feb. 27 article about the restoration of an Army file exchange service misspelled the name of Army's Aviation & Missile Center spokeswoman Kerensa Crum.

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MILITARY

Admirals: Ships won't sail unless they're prepared

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—Ships have been delayed or stopped from going on missions if they have been found not to have the necessary certifications or manning for the mission, two fleet commanders told Congress during a hearing Tuesday.

"If the ships in the Pacific Fleet are not ready to safely sail, they don't get underway. And that is my responsibility," Adm. John Aquilino, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, told the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on readiness.

Aquilino said he stopped two deployments after he assessed they did not have the level of training needed to deploy and conduct their mission.

The separate collisions in 2017 of the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain, in which 17 sailors were killed, forced the Navy to examine issues concerning service readiness, training, manning and operation tempo.

The problems and recommendations were laid out in a Fleet Comprehensive Review by Adm. Phil Davidson, now the commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019 also put in place changes for the surface fleet, including calling for improvements for skills training.

The subcommittee hearing was held Tuesday to discuss whether reforms implemented by the Navy since the collisions have been making a difference and what other improvements need to be made.

The Fitzgerald and McCain collisions happened in the Pacific Ocean, where most of the world's trade occurs and rising tensions, especially between the United States and China, make the re-

gion an active area for the U.S. Navy.

Aquilino said they are implementing recommendations laid out in the comprehensive review as well as the Strategic Readiness Review and a report from the Government Accountability Office.

He added they are confident that they are making changes to ensure that the fleet is "operating safely and it is certified to execute all the missions assigned."

Also at the hearing Tuesday was Adm. Christopher Grady, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command, who said he also has on several occasions stopped ships from going on missions for which they are not certified.

"We know what the requirement is and if they're not ready, they're not going," he said.

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., chairman of the sea power and projection forces subcommittee, asked the admirals what the process is for deciding whether a ship is ready to deploy.

Aquilino said he is briefed three times a week about the readiness of forces deployed and speaks to his commanders every week. He also has a weekly meeting on ships in maintenance. If he finds a problem with things such as manning, certification or equipment, Aquilino said he speaks to combatant commander Davidson about terminating the ship from its mission.

"As you know the world gets a vote, so depending on what's going on, we have had very frank conversations," he said. "And again in the instances I identified, Adm. Davidson concurred with my recommendations and we did not drop those ships."

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Military asks parts maker to refund 'excess profit'

Bloomberg

WASHINGTON — The Army and the Pentagon's purchasing agency are pursuing voluntary refunds from TransDigm Group Inc. after an inspector general's report found \$16.1 million in "excess profit" on \$26.2 million in sales by the manufacturer of aircraft components.

The Defense Department's watchdog office said it discovered excess profit on 46 of 47 parts in

a sample of purchases from 2015 to 2017, according to the report obtained by Bloomberg News. It said the company earned more than a reasonable profit on 46 of 47 parts sampled, ranging from excesses of 17 percent to 4,451 percent.

Liza Sabol, a spokeswoman for Cleveland-based TransDigm, did not provide an immediate comment on the audit, which was to be released Wednesday.



Courtesy of The Association of the U.S. Army

Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy, left, appears at an Association of the U.S. Army's Institute of Land Warfare event on Tuesday. At right is Gen. Carter Ham, president of AUSA.

Official: Army plans to cut \$31B from its 2020 budget

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Army will cut \$31 billion from its 2020 budget, with a chunk of the savings to be drawn from the elimination of outdated weapons systems, a top service official said.

The proposed cuts, expected to be detailed when the Army's budget is released March 12, are the result of 60 hours of top-level meetings by Army leaders. The focus was on transforming the budget to better prepare the force for high-level warfare and to counter adversaries such as China and Russia, Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy said Tuesday.

McCarthy, speaking at a breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Institute of Land Warfare, did not detail which programs were to be eliminated. But he said about \$8 billion comes from cost-avoidance measures and \$22 billion is from program reductions and terminations.

Going forward, the emphasis will be on modernizing the Army as it shifts its focus to great power competition. "It is a pretty dramatic shift," McCarthy said.

In October 2018, the Army laid out its six top modernization priorities, with developing long-range

precision fires as its top effort.

In January, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley said long-range precision fires will provide "a decisive advantage" in future fights. Other priorities are the development of the next generation combat vehicle, updated manned and unmanned aircraft, air and missile defense, an assortment of gear that makes soldiers more lethal and an improved Army communication network.

The Army's 2020 budget also is expected to boost the pace of rotations to its combat training centers in the United States and Germany, going from 20 this year to 32 in 2020.

This year, all operational units, including those in Europe and the Pacific, will be filled at 100 percent manning, Milley said last month. Next year, it will increase to 105 percent manning.

The Army will need to win congressional backing for the planned cuts, which in some cases could affect defense system manufacturers. But the Army's focus on modernization also will present new opportunities for industry, McCarthy said.

"We've been very consistent about where we were trying to take the Army," McCarthy said. "With that comes very difficult choices."

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Transgender: Committee will debate policy

FROM FRONT PAGE

The most definitive estimates of the population of transgender troops have come from a Defense Department-commissioned report in 2016. The nonpartisan Rand Corp. report estimated as many as several thousand among the 1.3 million servicemembers on active duty in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy. Rand researchers determined that their treatment would have negligible effects on military readiness.

The data obtained by USA Today show in greater detail the number and rank of troops receiving treatment, the type of therapy and the cost.

Gender dysphoria is a condition recognized by the medical and mental health community. The American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association and American Psychological Association oppose the Pentagon's ban, saying that there is no medically valid reason to exclude

those with the diagnosis of gender dysphoria from military service.

The Pentagon data date to July 1, 2016, when the Obama administration lifted the existing ban on service for transgender troops and allowed them to seek treatment. Since then, 1,524 troops have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria. In the active-duty force there were 500 in the Air Force, 442 in the Navy, 354 in the Air Force, 101 in the Marine Corps, 33 in the Coast Guard and four in the uniformed Public Health Service. And 90 servicemembers served in the reserves.

Through Feb. 1, the cost of treating troops with the diagnosis of gender dysphoria has totaled \$7,943,906.75. That included 22,992 psychotherapy visits, 9,321 prescriptions for hormones and 161 surgical procedures. Surgeries performed included 103 breast reductions or mastectomies, 37 hysterectomies, 17 "male reproductive" procedures and four breast augmentations.

Psychotherapy sessions cost nearly \$5.8 million and surgery cost more than \$2 million, according to the data.

The Pentagon's budget this year is \$716 billion.

"We need every qualified patriot willing to serve in our armed forces," said Air Force Lt. Col. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman. "The 2018 update to the 2016 policy is not a ban on transgender servicemembers; it is a policy on gender dysphoria. Any currently serving transgender servicemember with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria will remain under the 2016 policy. Any new policy will not apply to those individuals."

Wednesday's hearing was scheduled to be held before the House Armed Services Committee's panel on personnel, chaired by Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif. She has been a vocal critic of the Trump administration's efforts to exclude transgender people from serving in the military.

PACIFIC

Infant dies at unlicensed day care in Hawaii

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Katie Camario didn't want to involve herself in the unlicensed day care in the house next to hers at Aliamanu Military Reservation in Honolulu, but her growing fear that something terrible could happen to a child there pulled her in. On Sunday, a 7-month-old girl died in the day care.

She and her Air Force husband had moved into the Army-managed housing in October 2017, and Camario quickly noticed the hubbub of children playing in her next-door neighbor's back yard.

In the weeks to come, Camario said she saw disturbing scenes of wailing, unattended children — most appearing to be less than 5 years old. She said she saw children chasing each other with large sticks, a screaming child's head caught in playground equipment and, on one occasion, a toddler sticking a barbecue butane lighter in his mouth.

So she became involved, making numerous calls to the Army-managed housing and the military police, but the unlicensed day care always reopened even after being raided by police several times.

Fed up, Camario filed a sworn complaint last week under the military's Interactive Customer Evaluation, a grievance that would come to the direct attention of the commander of Army Garrison Hawaii. Military police shut the day care down again on Feb. 21.



GoFundMe

A GoFundMe page was set up Tuesday for a 7-month-old who died Sunday at an unlicensed day care at Aliamanu Military Reservation in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Honolulu Police Department has opened an "unintended death" investigation into the girl's death, according to Michelle Yu, an HPD spokeswoman.

An autopsy is pending at the medical examiner's office, which did not release the girl's name as of Tuesday.

A GoFundMe page set up Tuesday to raise money for the funeral identified the girl as Abigail.

Neighbors said the day care had the infant and an older sibling for an overnight stay.

There are "no suspicious circumstances or evidence of foul play at this time," Yu said.

But Camario and several other neighbors of the day care excoriated Army of-

ficials at a town hall meeting Monday night at Fort Shafter for failing to evict the tenant long before now. The meeting was one in a series being held in Hawaii to address recent concerns about the condition of military housing, and officials did not seem prepared to handle questions about day care.

"If you all knew for the span of over a year now that this had been going on at this home, why did you let it go on for this long?" Camario said.

Asked for additional information Tuesday, Army Garrison Hawaii said it could not comment on specific facts of the case because of the ongoing HPD investigation.

So-called "black market" day cares are commonplace in Hawaii's military housing because of the dearth of licensed centers.

"Moving to Oahu, every single military family is stuck with the decision of what to do with child care," Kelly Norris, an Aliamanu resident, told the town hall panel.

"We don't have any. People wait for a year to get their children into the [Child Development Centers]. They are forced to use child care from people they don't even know."

Under grilling by Camario, Col. Thomas Barrett, commander of Army Garrison Hawaii, said that tenants face eviction after two infractions such as running an unlicensed day care.

"It's once the second notice has occurred we will look into evicting you from the house," Barrett said.

A second cease-and-desist order was sent to Camario's neighbor in April 2018,

he said.

Camario asked who enforces the policy of "one, two strikes, you're out."

"It's the senior commander," Barrett said. "It's me."

In Camario's sworn statement for the Interactive Customer Evaluation — which Barrett told the audience he had read — she described a "most alarming incident" on Jan. 8, 2018.

"I was in the house and heard a child's voice yell, 'Fire! Fire!'" she wrote in the statement, a copy of which Stars and Stripes obtained. "I knew no one would be outside with these kids, so I went to the window and saw a boy about 4-5 years old with a long lighter. He was holding the lighter trying to light the netting of the trampoline. That's when I saw a flame come out of the lighter."

A toddler who looked about a year old subsequently got the lighter and put it in his mouth, she said.

Camario called the military police, who responded and entered the day care, she said.

"Here's the thing," Camario told the panel of Army officials at the town hall Monday. "You all constantly tell us — you all who are supposed to keep us safe — drill it into our heads that if you see something, say something. I did."

"That mantra is only effective if you all take care of those offenses before it gets to this point where we have a dead baby."

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THE NEW SANNO

PACIFIC

Okinawa governor calls for Marines to relocate

Tamaki wants US to move air operations outside of island prefecture following referendum over the weekend

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Okinawa's Gov. Denny Tamaki has called for relocating Marine air operations outside of the island prefecture following a prefecturewide referendum over the weekend.

Approximately 72 percent of voters who turned out Sunday voted against plans to reclaim land in Oura Bay at Camp Schwab for a new military runway. The plan is to close Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and move air operations to Henoko on Okinawa's less populated northern coast.

Tamaki's comments came a day after the vote as he answered questions from members of Okinawa's prefectural assembly about the dangers posed by Futenma, which Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya in October referred to as "the most dangerous air base in the world," if the relocation to Henoko is effectively blocked.

"I understand that it has been discussed between the U.S. and Japan, through the U.S. military



Nicole Rooze/Courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki has called for relocating Marine air operations outside of the island prefecture.

reorganization plan, that relocating Futenma outside of Japan was part of it, and I believe that Tokyo also understands that is a part of the plan," he said in response to a question from lawmaker Noriiji Yamakawa. "So why don't they move forward accordingly and relocate it outside of Japan — and I believe that is the best plan."

The plan to build the runway at the isolated Camp Schwab in northern Okinawa was agreed upon during bilateral negotia-

tions in 2006.

Tamaki's comments come days before he is scheduled to meet Friday in Tokyo with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe had said the relocation project will continue regardless of the referendum's result.

Abe's administration has maintained that U.S. military bases in Okinawa are needed due to the island's strategic importance and the deterrent capabilities of U.S. troops stationed there.

Local lawmakers wrangled over how best to fight the relocation, which they have typically been against and is already underway. The second phase of the project is already being prepped with surveys and seawall repairs.

The second phase would complete about one-fourth of the 0.6-square-mile total reclamation project.

Yamakawa asked if the governor considered requesting the shift off-island due to the seabed in the reclamation area in Oura Bay being softer than was previously expected.

Prefectural assembly chair spokesman Takekuni Ikeda said the assembly would continue to demand the relocation of Marine air operations outside of Okinawa — and even outside of Japan — and would not approve any changes to the plans because of the seabed conditions.

"An alternative place must be discussed with the rest of nations and shouldn't be decided in Tokyo," Ikeda said.

Marine officials Tuesday afternoon said they could not comment on a "domestic political issue."

"It is our goal to maintain a strong and transparent relationship with our gracious Okinawan hosts," a III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman wrote to Stars and Stripes. "Every day we strive to balance the concerns of the local community along with the necessity to maintain constant readiness in support of our treaty commitments with our partners and allies."

Local scholars said they believe there is little chance the relocation plan will change. However, they said the composition of the seabed will cause further delays giving activists more time to fight the project.

"I don't think this referendum will change the U.S. and Japanese governments' minds on Henoko," Ryukyu University professor Toshiaki Gabe wrote in an email Wednesday to Stars and Stripes. "Under the current Abe Cabinet, I don't think the rest of nation will agree to the idea, but perhaps, when it changes to a different cabinet, it may be possible to voice the idea to relocate to outside of Japan."

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PACIFIC

Camp Zama housing issues aired at meeting

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

CAMP ZAMA, Japan — Crows pecking at trash in overflowing dumpsters, brown tap water, summertime mold and cigarette smoke in tower apartments were among the housing issues raised by troops and families during a meeting Wednesday at the home of U.S. Army Japan.

Soldiers, civilian base workers and family members packed a basketball court at the Yano Fitness Center to voice their housing concerns to USARJ chief Maj. Gen. Viet Luong and other top officials.

The gathering was one of several at Far East bases this month to address housing issues following testimony about dilapidated military homes to the House Armed Services Committee on Feb. 13.

A number of troops raised their hands

when Luong asked who had discovered mold in their home.

"I have seen the mold," the general said, noting that it's a problem during Japan's humid summers.

One community member said the condensation in his home was so bad when he moved in that water was pouring through a wall. He said the problem has since been fixed.

Lt. Col. Greg Henz, 41, of Hamilton, Ohio, who arrived at Camp Zama late last year, told the meeting that barracks dumpsters fill up with trash dumped by people who don't live there.

"I've seen people that don't reside in bar-



Gage

racks ... dump their own garbage," he said. "Come Monday it's overflowing with trash. You see the crows pecking at the garbage because it hasn't been picked up."

Other issues raised by Henz were insecure barracks doors, a lack of storage space, not enough washing machines and dryers and rust-colored tap water.

U.S. Army Garrison Japan commander Col. Phillip Gage said someone should put in a work order to fix the doors and that officials would look at the washer/dryer issue.

There isn't storage space in some accommodations, which were built decades ago, but storage sheds are available for some personnel, he said.

Regular testing of the water on Camp Zama shows it's safe to drink, Gage said.

Army spouse Lisa Connell complained to the meeting about people in tower apart-

ments smoking on balconies. Centrally-controlled heating means her family often opens windows to cool down but that lets in smoke from neighbors' cigarettes, she said.

Gage said designated smoking areas are available away from the towers and that officials would look at options for enforcing the ban on balcony smoking.

At the Zama meeting, officials outlined a new housing hotline — DSN 315-262-3228 — that soldiers in Japan can call to get issues fixed promptly.

Inspections of military housing are ongoing at bases in Japan and South Korea. On Feb. 15 top military officials ordered commanders to inspect all housing for which they were responsible within 30 days.

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Bilingual Marine stands out during exercise in Japan

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

TAKASHIMA, Japan — Lance Cpl. Robert Lehman, a bilingual rifleman who lived in Japan for two years before enlisting in the Marine Corps, helped his fellow Marines overcome a language barrier during recent training with the U.S. ally.

Lehman, 23, a Grantsville, Utah, native and reservist with the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Infantry Regiment, served as an impromptu unit interpreter during Forest Light, a weeklong military exercise in central Japan involving U.S. Marines and soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force earlier this month.

As a missionary, Lehman traveled the country and left in 2016 fluent in Japanese. His linguistic services provided his leaders a bonus; it's rare for Marines serving in a field unit to be fluent in the local language.

Having a translator who is also a Marine when working alongside partner nations is invaluable, said Capt. Ayrton Foy, commander of F Company, 2nd Infantry Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment.

"There is always the potential that [a native] interpreter doesn't understand the idea of living in the field," Foy said. "A Marine will know the essential equipment he needs to bring, and you don't have to worry about him being a liability."

A bilingual Marine can keep up on a march and take part in an attack, but also understands Marine Corps tactics, techniques and procedures, he said.

Lehman was on loan to F Company to assist the Marines who teamed up with soldiers from the JGSDF's 7th Infantry Regiment, Middle Army, for Exercise Forest Light 19-2 in early February.

"They are very lucky to have him at his proficiency level to be able to listen and quickly translate things," 2nd Lt. Brett Vanier, a communications strategy officer supporting Forest Light, said during a Feb. 7 interview with Stars and Stripes.

Before he was commissioned as a Marine officer, Vanier was an enlisted Marine and an Indonesian linguist. Even Marines who spend nine months at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., are often not proficient enough to translate on the fly the way Lehman is able to, Vanier said.

Native speakers make the best interpreters because they understand the nuances of the language; however, they are often not



CHRISTIAN LOPEZ/Stars and Stripes

Lance Cpl. Robert Lehman, a rifleman with 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Marine Regiment, is fluent in Japanese.

highly proficient in English, Vanier said. Things can get lost in translation, which is why bilingual Marines like Lehman are so valuable.

Most Marine linguists who graduate

from the language institute — where they learn a country's history and culture as well as its language — end up working for the National Security Agency, Vanier said.

He said he spent three years as a linguist

for the NSA in Hawaii, but rarely worked on a mission related to Indonesia.

Many linguists would love to support a company of Marines during exercises like Forest Light, he said.

Referring to Lehman's example, he said the Marine Corps would also benefit from sending its linguists into the field more often.

"The only thing I wanted to do after I graduated from DLI was visit Indonesia and use what I learned," Vanier said.

During the Forest Light exercise, the biggest challenge for the Marines of 2-23 was overcoming the language barrier, said 2nd Battalion commander Lt. Col. David Ortiz.

"When you conduct any type of bilateral exercise, you will never have enough linguists. I don't think this is a unique problem for Forest Light," he said. "It is a challenge you will always face when working with a foreign partner."

Lehman was the most helpful by spending his off time helping the JGSDF linguists understand Marine jargon so they, in turn, could provide better translation services between the JGSDF and the Marines.

Marines and other U.S. forces often rely on interpreters provided by the partner nations when conducting bilateral exercises. The same rule applies to forces in combat zones like Iraq or Afghanistan, where civilians who grew up in-country are hired as translators.

Additionally, the Marine Corps does not track language skills for individual Marines unless it is required for a specific military occupational specialty, although commanders may track and employ self-professed bilingual Marines as they see fit, Capt. Karoline Foote, a Marine spokeswoman said in an emailed statement to Stars and Stripes.

Vanier said 2-23 has been smart about the rotation and use of their bilingual Marines. Besides Lehman, the battalion's two Korean-speaking Marines were attached to the infantry company that is deployed to Korea.

Lehman, who self-identified as a fluent Japanese speaker before the deployment, said being bilingual builds cohesion between two countries.

"It's really, really cool to see two people who don't speak each other's languages build a relationship," he said. "I think that's really special."

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PACIFIC

Funding urged for trauma registry for military dogs

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Military working dogs have repeatedly proven their worth in combat zones during America's lengthy wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, where their discerning snouts have sniffed out explosive booby traps better than any machine could.

But their work has come at a cost. A recent study found that of an estimated 2,600 war dogs deployed from 2001 through 2013 to those two countries, 92 died, primarily of gunshot wounds and explosions.

Now, a group of veterinarians and medical experts with the Department of Defense is urging funding for a trauma registry for military working dogs like that being used to collate and analyze battle injuries incurred by human warfighters.

The Army formed the Military Working Dog Trauma Registry Strategic Planning Group to look into the infrastructure needed for a working dog trauma registry, which the group described as "crucial to improve survival of [military working dogs] on the battlefield" in a white paper published in November.

A registry would uniformly create an abstract containing vital statistics on a particular dog, the nature of the medical issue, successful or failed treatments and outcome.

The planning group draws its members from the Department of Defense's Military Working Dog Veterinary Service and the Joint Trauma System, the latter of which is tasked with reducing disease, injuries and deaths in the armed forces.

Measured by the Defense Department's annual budget of more than a half-trillion dollars, the funding needed to develop and sustain such a working dog registry is minuscule.

It would cost about \$300,000 to develop and launch, then \$115,000 a year to manage, according to the Joint Trauma System.

Most of the raw data needed for a dog registry is being collected but not in "a centralized, over-arching manner," said Col. Andy McGraw, director of the Military Working Dog Veterinary Service at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"When I was deployed in 2010, my ability to look at and evaluate military working dog mortality data was limited to my time on the ground there in Afghanistan," said McGraw, a veterinarian and member of the trauma planning group. "I don't know what happened after I left there because the information was classified and, also, it was kind of disjointed and disconnected."

A centralized registry — durable over time and multiple deployments — is vital, he said.

"Unless we have the data that tells us what are the more life-im-



Maj. Renee Krebs, a veterinary surgeon with Veterinary Medical Center Europe, prepares Alex, a military working dog, to have his leg amputated in Kaiserslautern, Germany, in August.

iting problems that affect working dogs in an operational setting, how do we know how to best tailor our training, our equipping and other things to better serve the needs of both the dogs and the handlers?" he said. "Is it heat injury? Is it IED blasts? Is it gunshot wounds? Is it blunt-force trauma?"

"I can think that most dogs are suffering from gunshot wounds, but what if that's not the reality on the ground?" he said. "And maybe that was the case during the time I was deployed, but maybe I was deployed at a time that's not representative of the whole 15 years we've been deployed."

"By capturing that data over a longer period of time, it's going to help us identify holes in our training, for example," he said. "I use the example of IED blasts. I did not learn one thing in veterinary school about how an improvised explosive device could injure a dog — or the injuries that fall out from that."

The first detailed study of the causes of death in military working dogs was published last fall in the journal *Military Medicine*. Of the 92 dog fatalities analyzed from 2001-13 in Iraq and Afghanistan, 31.5 percent were from gunshot wounds, 26.1 percent from explosions and 9.8 percent from heat stress. Among other causes were drowning, electrocution, vehicle impact and a helicopter crash.

Yet despite being the most comprehensive study of its kind, the authors concluded that "limitations to the available data undermine the potential for our results to inform prevention of injuries and advances in medical care."

Researchers were not even able to determine the actual number of dogs deployed to those two conflict zones during that 13-year period because some data were classified. Without a comparison group of dogs deployed in the same period that did not die, the researchers were unable to identify risk factors for death among working dogs.

The study was hampered by "missing records, missing data

within the available records and inconsistencies in documentation." Some records listed the cause of death simply as "euthanasia." A formal dog registry could fill in those gaping holes, leading to better outcomes for wounded or injured dogs.

The conclusions drawn from such data could, for instance, drive development of protective equipment for dogs or changes to clinical practice guidelines used for treating war dogs.

"It can drive research funding and research projects [aimed] toward helping us give better care to these patients," McGraw said.

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H&R BLOCK

Navy showcases new Poseidon aircraft at Australian air show

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

Navy Patrol Squadron 47 and its Boeing P-8A Poseidon aircraft arrived Tuesday at Avalon Airport in Geelong, Victoria, Australia, to participate in one of that country's largest aviation exhibitions, according to the U.S. Navy.

The squadron will hold flight demonstrations and display the Poseidon throughout the six-day Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition 2019, according to a Navy statement Monday.

Patrol Squadron 47 appeared last week at Aero India, one of the largest air shows and exhibitions in Asia, along with F/A-18 Super Hornets of Navy Strike Fighter Squadron 27.

The P-8A is a variant of Boeing's 737-800, designed to replace the Navy fleet of P-3s. Boeing, by April 2017, had delivered at least 53 of the advanced, long-range, anti-submarine patrol and reconnaissance aircraft to the Navy.

In January, the Navy signed a \$2.4 billion contract with Boeing for another 19 P-8As, according to The Diplomat online magazine.

The Royal Australian Air Force, which agreed to purchase eight, took delivery of its first P-8A in November 2016, according to a Boeing press release in January 2016.

The aircraft is considered one

of the most advanced of its type.

"Our participation [at the Australian air show] will strengthen our ties and working relationships with our Australian counterparts, as well as our other partners within the Indo-Pacific," Senior Chief Ronald Lilley, the squadron senior enlisted leader for the Avalon 2019 detachment, said in the statement.

The Australian air force, army and navy and air forces from Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and France also send contingents to the event, according to the statement.

"We have had the opportunity to work with our Australian allies on numerous exercises throughout the Pacific, including Sea Dragon, our most recent exercise in Guam and (Rim of the Pacific) this past summer in Hawaii," Lt. Derek Hinkley, Patrol Squadron 47 detachment officer-in-charge, said in the statement. "Working with them at this air show will allow us to see familiar faces as well as continue our great partnership."

The last Avalon event, held in 2017, had a total attendance of 210,664, including representatives of 664 different companies from 25 countries, 158 delegations and approximately 33,000 accredited trade attendees, according to the statement.

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PACIFIC

Trump, Kim begin 2nd summit upbeat

President: North could thrive if it gives up nukes

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

HANOI, Vietnam — President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un smiled and shook hands Wednesday as they expressed hope for a successful summit while facing pressure to deliver concrete commitments on denuclearization.

Both leaders struck a positive note as they made brief remarks to reporters, then held a 20-minute, one-on-one talk before sitting down to dinner with key aides.

"I thought the first summit was a great success and I think this one ultimately will be equal or greater," Trump said, sitting next to Kim with a backdrop of American and North Korean flags. "We've made a lot of progress, and I think the biggest progress was our relationship is really a good one."

Trump and Kim first met on June 12 in Singapore, an unprecedented summit between the countries, which have been enemies since the 1950-53 Korean War.

They promised in a vaguely worded statement to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," as well as to improve relations, build a "lasting and stable peace regime" and to recover the remains of thousands of troops killed in the war.

But talks over how to implement that agreement stalled, raising skepticism over the North's willingness to relinquish its hard-won nukes.

Predicting success

Trump insisted the first summit was a success, though he noted "some people would like to sit on the sidelines."

Kim said the time between summits had been filled with "a lot of effort, a lot of thinking and a lot of patience."

"We have been able to overcome all the obstacles and here we are today," he said, smiling frequently. "I hope that we can provide an outcome that is welcome by everyone, and I'm sure that we can do this."

Trump and Kim were later joined around a small dinner table by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney; Kim's top envoy, Kim Yong Chol; and North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho.

The leaders, who arrived in Hanoi on Tuesday, were due to begin more in-depth talks Thursday. Trump said there would also likely be a news conference at some point.

The two-day summit began as Trump faces political turmoil at home, with his former lawyer and confidant Michael Cohen offering potentially damaging tes-



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump speaks during a dinner with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday in Hanoi, Vietnam. In their second summit, Trump is under pressure to achieve concrete commitments from Kim.

timony about the president to a House committee Wednesday. Trump tweeted from Hanoi prior to Cohen's testimony that Cohen "is lying in order to reduce his prison time."

The White House restricted access to the summit, barring four print reporters from covering the beginning of Trump's dinner with Kim after two of those reporters asked questions of the president during earlier events at the summit, according to reports.

Economic incentives

The president also reiterated his frequent promise that North Korea could achieve economic prosperity if it agrees to relinquish nuclear weapons.

"I think that your country has tremendous economic potential," Trump said during his opening remarks with Kim at the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hotel. "I think you will have a tremendous future with your country. I look forward to watching it happen and helping it to happen."

Trump is under pressure to achieve concrete commitments from Kim, who has promised to dismantle his country's main nuclear material production facility at Yongbyon in exchange for "corresponding measures" from the United States.

The president hasn't revealed what he may put on the table at the Hanoi summit, but officials and experts say a possible con-

'I think a peace declaration, while certainly not the same as a peace treaty, kicks the can down the road in a direction where we're potentially removing troops from the peninsula.'

Olivia Enos
policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center

cession could be an agreement to open liaison offices between the two countries, which don't have diplomatic relations.

Trump also may agree to a declaration symbolically ending the war, which concluded with an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Asked earlier if the summit would result in a peace deal, Trump said, "We'll see."

The president also may press for more progress in recovering the remains of war dead as that effort also has slowed after the return of 55 boxes of bones believed to be of American soldiers.

The U.S. administration has insisted it won't relax sanctions until it sees fully verified denu-

clearization, but some officials suggested that Washington could agree to further exemptions that would allow inter-Korean economic projects to move forward.

Too much, too soon?

North Korea observers expressed concern that Trump may give away too much without requiring Pyongyang to agree to the long-sought U.S. goal of verifiable denuclearization.

Olivia Enos, a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center, said she was most concerned about the possibility of a peace declaration and offering economic investment in exchange for the Yongbyon dismantlement.

"I think these both lead to an undermining of the pressure strategy, which has not achieved maximum pressure, not even close," she said in an interview.

Enos said the peace declaration would be "coming at the wrong time" and could further chip away at the U.S.-South Korean alliance, which already has been hit by differences over cost-sharing and the approach to dealing with the North.

"I think a peace declaration, while certainly not the same as a peace treaty, kicks the can down the road in a direction where we're potentially removing troops from the peninsula," she said.

Trump also should seize the opportunity to address human rights abuses by North Korea,

which so far have not been part of the talks between the two countries, Enos said.

Trump has praised North Korea for steps already taken, including the cessation of nuclear and missile tests that had raised fears of a new conflict on the divided peninsula in 2017.

The Vietnamese capital, meanwhile, was enjoying the attention brought by the summit. Men and women on the ubiquitous motorbikes that fill the streets pulled over to stores to buy North Korean and American flags.

Storekeepers did a brisk business peddling summit T-shirts emblazoned with photos of Trump and Kim together.

Trump tweeted earlier that the Southeast nation was a model for North Korea as a communist country that emerged from two decades of war to become an economic success story.

But North Korea was not likely to see it as a model, according to Victor Cha of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Good point but not likely to resonate," Cha tweeted in response to Trump. "North Korea does not like to be compared with a 'small' Southeast Asian country."

Vietnam has a population of nearly 100 million, four times that of North Korea, but Pyongyang considers itself more "developed," Cha wrote.

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PACIFIC



T-shirts for sale this week in Hanoi, Vietnam, advertise the second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.



A motorcyclist waves American and North Korean flags Wednesday on a street in Hanoi.

The summit street scene

PHOTOS AND STORY
By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

HANOI, Vietnam — Streets of were teeming with activity this week as the Vietnamese capital prepared to host the second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader

Kim Jong Un.

Flags from all three countries were strung along the streets, and storekeepers hawked summit souvenirs that included T-shirts emblazoned with photos of the two leaders.

Trump has touted Vietnam as a model that North Korea could

emulate as it's a communist country that has achieved economic prosperity and normal ties with the United States after emerging from the devastation of two decades of war, which ended in 1975.

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Above: Motorists on Tuesday drive by a sign advertising the summit between Trump and Kim in Hanoi.

Left: The Ho Chi Minh mausoleum towers above a vast square in Hanoi.

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MILITARY



PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

A U.S. soldier, left, observes Georgian soldiers during the Georgia Defense Readiness Program on Wednesday.

Troops teach technique in Tbilisi

US soldiers find Georgians battle-tested, hampered by old-fashioned leadership models

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

TBILISI, Georgia — Hidden behind a scraggy, mountain tree line with a clear view through a field of frost-covered grass, the soldiers were in a perfect position to ambush enemy forces moving in front of them, but nobody fired.

The soldiers were all waiting on the commanding officer to give them the “go ahead,” costing valuable time for the would-be ambushers.

That, U.S. advisers said, is a typical problem Georgian troops face during the training in the Georgian Defense Readiness Program, currently underway in the hills above Tbilisi.

“The Georgians are a little old-fashioned,” said 1st Lt. Richard Klocksieben, one of the U.S. Army advisers. Like in many former Soviet militaries, the Georgian noncommissioned officers frequently have fewer leadership responsibilities than their Western counterparts. “They rely too much on their senior officers for things they should be delegating to their NCOs,” Klocksieben said.

U.S. soldiers here have been advising their counterparts on when and how to use NCOs, and how to delegate more authority to the lower-level soldiers.

“They have some problems, but they’re working on them,” Klocksieben said.

During the training scenario, in which Georgian soldiers defended their home country from a mock foreign invader, many of the soldiers have been using newer weapons the army has acquired, including Javelin anti-tank missiles and M240B machine guns — weapons the U.S. soldiers are very familiar with.

While the U.S. soldiers are not there officially to train the Georgians on the use of these weapon systems, the Americans have been offering tips and advice when they can, said Maj. Jon-Paul Navarro, the



A Georgian soldier brings a mock casualty to safety during the program.

officer in charge of the several dozen U.S. troops here.

“We let them know when we would use a Javelin or what kinds of positions we might set up for defense,” Navarro said. “They’ve taken to them very well.”

All nine of Georgia’s nine light infantry battalions are expected to undergo the training, aimed at modernizing the force, and will learn to use the new weapons to increase their defensive capabilities.

The Georgian army is in the process of building up its NCO corps, said Georgian Col. Roman Janjulia, commander of the training center.

Its old style of top-down leadership is a relic of the country’s past and a common problem in many of the former Soviet republics.

Unlike some of those other militaries, however, Georgian soldiers have been on extensive deployments to the Middle East, becoming the largest per capita contributor of soldiers to the international coalition in Afghanistan by late 2012.

That experience has led to a very effective

military force, Navarro said.

“Warfare is no stranger to them,” Navarro said. “The soldiers here are extremely motivated, and very experienced.”

In addition to loads of experience on the battlefield, the Georgian soldiers have another advantage — their hardness — Klocksieben said.

“The weather here has been absolutely terrible. The winds are so cold that our guys are shivering, but the Georgian soldiers are all having a great time, joking around with smiles on their faces, like it doesn’t affect them,” he said.

The U.S. advisers say the Georgians are also especially good at mountain warfare, which comes as no surprise as the country is at the heart of the Caucasus Mountains.

“I’ve had to hike up a few of these hills and it’s hard work. But we see the Georgians zipping up and down them like they’re nothing,” Klocksieben said. “They’re tough guys. They just need to work on their junior leadership.”

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Report says NGA official gave the OK to sham bonuses

By ALAN GOMEZ
USA Today

A senior Pentagon official approved \$230,000 in fraudulent bonuses to seven officials preparing to leave the department, according to a report released Thursday by the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General.

Ellen Ardrey served as the director of human development at the Pentagon’s National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, or NGA, a massive agency based in Springfield, Va., that employs 14,500 people who provide situational intelligence on everything from counterterrorism and weapons of mass destruction to wildfires and Super Bowls.

According to the report, Ardrey allowed senior officials at the NGA to downgrade their positions for one pay period, which in turn allowed them to leave the agency with a \$40,000 early retirement buyout incentive. Such “early out” packages can be quickly approved by agency directors such as Ardrey for nonsenior officials when an agency goes through downsizing, but they must receive clearance from the undersecretary for defense for all senior officials.

After a two-year investigation that included interviews with 16 witnesses and the review of more than 31,000 emails, the Inspector General’s Office found that Ardrey complained that the process to receive approval for buyouts for senior officials was “onerous” and “slow,” telling leadership, “The juice ain’t worth the squeeze on this.”

Instead, Ardrey suggested to senior officials that they downgrade their position for one pay period to speed up the process. She told investigators that she believed she was acting legally and that there was no law or policy that prohibited her from temporarily downgrading senior officials to hasten their buyout packages.

“However, DoD buyout incentive subject matter experts that we interviewed told us that Ms. Ardrey’s downgrade and buyout incentive plan for senior officials was ‘gross mismanagement,’ ‘improper use of government resources,’ ‘looks like a shell game just to get them the opportunity to get an incentive,’ and would only make sense if somebody wanted to get around the onerous approval process ... for senior officials,” the report concluded. “We agree.”

In a response to the report, Ardrey wrote that she had conducted similar downgrades at another government agency and that other employees at the NGA told her the process “was not prohibited.”

The investigation’s preliminary conclusion is based on inference and opinion with insufficient evidence to substantiate intentional circumvention of DoD policy,” Ardrey wrote. “The recommendations I developed ... were consistent with policy and followed established authorities.”

Ardrey could not be reached for comment. An NGA statement on Thursday said Ardrey is still employed by the agency and that officials there are dealing with the report internally.

“NGA encourages its employees to report misconduct and sets a high standard of conduct for all employees, regardless of grade,” the statement read.

The investigation into Ardrey’s actions started in 2017 when four anonymous complaints were filed against her, according to the report.

NATION

Cohen tells panel Trump 'was telling me to lie'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Shaking off criticism from House Republicans, President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer declared under oath Wednesday that Trump knew ahead of time and embraced the news when told that WikiLeaks had emails damaging to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. Michael Cohen also testified that Trump is a "racist," a "con man" and a "cheat."

Cohen, called to testify by Democrats over the objections of Republicans, suggested that Trump also implicitly told him to lie about a Moscow real estate project. Cohen has pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about the project, which he says Trump knew about as Cohen was negotiating with Russia during the 2016 election campaign.

The hearing was producing the most damning depiction to date of Trump's campaign and business operations from a longtime member of his inner circle. It was the first in Cohen's evolution from legal fixer for the president — he once boasted he'd "take a bullet" for Trump — to a foe who has implicated him in federal campaign finance violations.

"I am ashamed of my weakness and misplaced loyalty, of the things I did for Mr. Trump in an effort to protect and promote him," Cohen said. "I am ashamed that I chose to take part in concealing Mr. Trump's illicit acts rather than listening to my own conscience, an ashamed because I know what Mr. Trump is."

Democrats asked Cohen about details of his accusations against Trump, while Republicans on the House Oversight and Reform Committee focused on assailing him and his credibility.

Accused at length by one GOP lawmaker of being a pathological liar, Cohen responded, "Sir, are you referring to me or the

president?"

On a more substantive matter, Cohen said at one point that prosecutors in New York are investigating conversations Trump or his advisers had with him after his hotel room was raided for documents by the FBI.

He was asked by a Democratic congressman about the last contact he had had with Trump or any agent representing the president.

Cohen said that happened about two months after his hotel room was raided by the FBI in April 2018. But he declined to provide more specific details and said the matter was being investigated by federal prosecutors.

As for the Clinton emails, Cohen's claims that Trump had advance knowledge about the WikiLeaks release contradict the president's assertions that he was in the dark, but it was not clear what evidence Cohen had to support the allegation or even how legally problematic it would be for Trump. Special counsel Robert Mueller has not suggested that mere awareness of WikiLeaks plans, as Trump confidant Roger Stone is purported to have had, is by itself a crime.

Underscoring the deeply partisan nature of the proceedings, Democrats on the committee lifted an earlier restriction that the hearing not delve into Russia, while Republicans tried unsuccessfully to block the hearing as it got underway, on grounds that Cohen had not provided his opening statement long enough in advance.

The committee's top Republican, Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, sought early on to undermine Cohen's credibility by calling him a "fraudster, cheat" and "a convicted felon."

"Certainly it's the first time a convicted perjurer has been brought back to be a star witness at a hearing," Jordan said.

Cohen said Trump did not directly tell him to lie, but "he would look me in the eye and tell me there's no business in Russia and then go out and lie to the American people by saying the same thing."

Cohen said that "in his way, he was telling me to lie." He added that lawyers for Trump had "reviewed and edited" the statement in which Cohen falsely said a proposal for a Trump Tower in Moscow had been abandoned in January 2016. Cohen has since said he continued pursuing the project for Trump for months after that.

Trump, at a Vietnam hotel before a planned meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and unable to ignore the drama playing out thousands of miles away, lashed out at Cohen on Twitter, saying his lawyer "did bad things unrelated to Trump" and "is lying in order to reduce his prison time."

A judge already has set Cohen's sentence, and Cohen's cooperation will have no bearing on that term. Cohen, ahead of his appearance, said Tuesday that the American people could decide "exactly who is telling the truth" when he testified before the House committee.

On WikiLeaks, Cohen said in the prepared testimony that he was in Trump's office in July 2016 when longtime adviser Roger Stone telephoned Trump. Trump put Stone on speakerphone and Stone told him that he had communicated with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and that "within a couple of days, there would be a massive dump of emails that would damage Hillary Clinton's campaign," according to Cohen.

Trump responded by saying "wouldn't that be great," Cohen said.

That month, WikiLeaks released thousands of emails hacked from the Democratic Na-



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, center, ranking member of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, talks with Reps. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., left, and Thomas Massie, R-Ky., during testimony by Michael Cohen, depicted in an exhibit behind them, Wednesday.

tional Committee's server.

"A lot of people have asked me about whether Mr. Trump knew about the release of the hacked Democratic National Committee emails ahead of time," Cohen said in the prepared testimony. "The answer is yes."

Cohen said he does not have direct evidence that Trump colluded with the Russian government during the election, but that he has "suspicions." Of a meeting in Trump Tower between campaign advisers, including Trump's oldest son, and a Russian lawyer, Cohen said that Trump had frequently told him that Donald Trump Jr. "had the worst judgment of anyone in the world" and he "would never set up any meeting of any significance alone — and certainly not without checking with his father."

Cohen, once Trump's loyal attorney, has turned on his former boss and cooperated with Mueller's Russia investigation. He begins a three-year prison sentence in May after pleading guilty to lying to Congress in 2017 and committing campaign finance violations while working for Trump.

He met with the Senate Intelligence Committee for more than nine hours behind closed doors on Tuesday. Cohen said afterward that he appreciated the opportunity to "clear the record and tell the truth" to the panel after ac-

knowing he lied to the committee in 2017.

It was the first of three days of congressional appearances for Cohen. After the public hearing, he will appear privately before the House intelligence panel Thursday.

Republicans were expected to aggressively attempt to discredit Cohen, given that he has acknowledged lying previously.

Florida Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz tweeted Tuesday that the world is "about to learn a lot" about Cohen and suggested he knew of disparaging information that could come out during the hearing. Gaetz later apologized and said he was deleting the tweet. Gaetz, a Trump ally who talks to the president frequently, is not a member of the committee that was questioning Cohen.

House OKs Dems' bill blocking declaration on wall

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats have ignored a veto threat and passed legislation that would stymie President Donald Trump's bid for billions of extra dollars for a U.S.-Mexico border wall. The move has escalated a clash over whether he has abused his powers to advance the signature pledge of his 2016 campaign.

The House's 245-182 vote Tuesday to block Trump's national emergency declaration fell well below the two-thirds majority that would be needed to override what would be the first veto of Trump's presidency. Thirteen Republicans backed the Democrats' measure as top Republicans warned

to keep defections as low as possible, wanting to avoid a tally suggesting that Trump's hold on lawmakers was weakening.

The issue is now before the Republican-run Senate, where there already were enough GOP defections to edge the resolution to the brink of passage. Vice President Mike Pence used a lunch with Republican senators at the Capitol to try keeping them aboard, citing a crisis at the border, but there were no signs he had succeeded.

"I personally couldn't handicap the outcome at this point," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who plans a vote within the next three weeks. He even said Republicans

remained uncertain about the legality of Trump's move.

The showdown was forcing Republicans to cast uncomfortable votes pitting their support for a

president popular with GOP voters against fears that his use of emergency powers would invite future Democratic presidents to do likewise.

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NATION

Associates may have helped singer in abuse

By MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO — After R. Kelly met a girl celebrating her 16th birthday at a restaurant, it was his manager who handed her Kelly's business card with the R&B star's personal phone number on it, telling the teen that Kelly wanted her to give him a call, according to prosecutors.

The 52-year-old singer-songwriter was charged last week with sexually abusing the girl once a month for a year after she retrieved the card from her mom's purse and phoned Kelly. In all, prosecutors accuse him of abusing four females, three of whom were between 13 and 17.

Kelly is looking at the possibility of decades in prison if convicted, but there's no official word on whether the manager or anyone else in his inner circle might face charges for complicity in any abuse or for failing to report abuse if they suspected it.

Legal experts say it's not obvious what laws could be invoked.

All 50 states require that certain professionals, including doctors and teachers, report any suspicions of child abuse, but only around a third mandate that all adults do. Kelly's home state of Illinois is not among them.

More than 10 Kelly associates, such as agents and security guards, could be exposed to criminal liability in the Chicago case for staying silent about abuse or actively assisting Kelly, said Michael Avenatti, a lawyer for two Kelly accusers.

In a phone interview, he said Kelly depended heavily on others to target underage girls, to transport them and to pay them off to keep quiet over the years he ascended from busking on Chicago subway platforms to become a best-selling music artist.

Kelly "could not have accomplished this for 28 years without the assistance of others who looked the other way because they didn't want the R. Kelly gravy train to end," Avenatti said Tuesday.

The question isn't limited to Kelly insiders. Critics have blasted law enforcement for not pursuing the Grammy winner more aggressively.

"Every system in this city — police, courts, the South and West sides, the churches, everybody — has failed these young black female victims," argued Jim DeRogatis, who as a Chicago Sun-Times reporter played the central role in revealing the sex-abuse accusations. He told television station WTTW's "Chicago Tonight" on Monday that 48 women have shared with him their stories of abuse by Kelly since 1991.

Kelly's attorney, Steve Greenberg, declined to comment on any possible criminal exposure involving people around Kelly. He said he is "constrained by the canons of ethics" from addressing anything other than allegations directed at his client.

Music industry stalwarts seemed to look the other way when whispers began 25 years ago and grew louder.

Fans didn't back away either.

In 2013, after allegations of abuse were widely known, concert venues sold out for the tour promoting his album "Black Panties." The album peaked at No. 2 on Billboard's R&B chart and sold 500,000 copies by 2015. His next album, "The Buffet," went to No. 1 in 2016.

If prosecutors do go after Kelly's confidantes, Avenatti expects many to turn on him.

"His handlers and enablers are going to look to save their own butts as opposed to R. Kelly," he said.

In tears, while others vented their anger when, midway through the session, delegates defeated a proposal that would have let regional and local church bodies decide for themselves on gay-friendly policies.

"Devastation," was how former Methodist pastor Rebecca Wilson of Detroit described her feelings. "As someone who left because I'm gay, I'm waiting for the church I love to stop bringing more hate."

After several more hours of debate, the conservatives' proposal, called the Traditional Plan, was



ERIN HOOLEY, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/AP

Chicago mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot, a former federal prosecutor, appears with supporters Tuesday at Evolver in Chicago. Lightfoot was the top vote-getter in a field of 14.



ASHLEE REZIN, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES/AP

Chicago mayoral candidate Toni Preckwinkle speaks Tuesday. The Cook County Board president is now in a race that will guarantee the city's next mayor will be an African-American woman.

Two African-American women in runoff to be Chicago mayor

By HERBERT G. McCANN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — A former federal prosecutor and a county board leader will face each other in a runoff to become Chicago's first black female mayor after leading a large field Tuesday that included a member of the Daley family that has dominated the city's politics for much of the last six decades.

Political outsider Lori Lightfoot, who was a federal prosecutor in northern Illinois, and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle were the top two vote-getters among 14 candidates, but neither received more than the 50 percent needed to avoid an April 2 runoff. The winner will succeed Mayor Rahm Emanuel to lead the nation's third-largest city. Emanuel did not seek re-election.

Among those they defeated was William Daley, who has never held major elected office but featured the most famous surname in the race. His father, Richard J. Daley, and brother, Richard M.

Daley, held the city's top job for nearly 43 years of a 55-year span before Emanuel took the oath in 2011. Daley is a former U.S. Commerce secretary who, like Emanuel, served as White House chief of staff to President Barack Obama.

Emanuel's decision not to seek a third term drew some of the biggest names in state and municipal government as would-be successors, along with some political newcomers with strong support, in a transitional election for a lakefront metropolis still struggling to shed its reputation for corruption, police brutality and street violence.

"What do you think of us now?" Lightfoot said Tuesday night to a crowd of her supporters. "This is what change looks like."

Lightfoot, the first openly gay woman to run for Chicago mayor, has been critical of efforts to reform the Chicago Police Department in the wake of the 2014 fatal shooting of black teenager Laquan McDonald by a white police officer.

Preckwinkle, who leads the

county's Democratic Party, also made a campaign issue out of McDonald's shooting.

"We may not be at the finish line. But, we should acknowledge that history is being made," Preckwinkle, who previously served 19 years on the City Council and was a Chicago Public Schools teacher, told her supporters.

Turnout was low Tuesday. Jim Allen, spokesman for the Chicago Board of Election, said by late afternoon turnout was around 27 percent of registered voters. The record low for a February mayoral election was 33.8 percent in 2007, when Emanuel was first elected.

"It appears that some voters either just disengaged or are not willing to make a decision until they know who's in the runoff, assuming there is a runoff," Allen said.

Businessman Willie Wilson, Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza and activist Amara Enyia, who received financial support from Kanye West and Chance the Rapper, rounded out the top vote-getters.

United Methodist delegates reject recognizing same-sex marriages

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The United Methodist Church, America's second-largest Protestant denomination, faces a likely surge in defections and acts of defiance after delegates at a crucial conference voted Tuesday to strengthen the faith's divisive bans on same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBT clergy.

Emotions were high throughout the third and final day of the UMC's meeting. Some supporters of greater LGBT inclusion were

in tears, while others vented their anger when, midway through the session, delegates defeated a proposal that would have let regional and local church bodies decide for themselves on gay-friendly policies.

"Devastation," was how former Methodist pastor Rebecca Wilson of Detroit described her feelings. "As someone who left because I'm gay, I'm waiting for the church I love to stop bringing more hate."

After several more hours of debate, the conservatives' proposal, called the Traditional Plan, was

approved by a vote of 438-384. Opponents unsuccessfully sought to weaken the plan with hostile amendments or to prolong the debate past a mandatory adjournment time set to accommodate a monster truck rally in the arena.

The Traditional Plan's success was due to an alliance of conservatives from the U.S. and overseas. About 43 percent of the delegates were from abroad, mostly from Africa, and overwhelmingly supported the LGBT bans.

If the bans were eased, "the church in Africa would cease to

exist," said the Rev. Jerry Kulah of Liberia. "We can't do anything but to support the Traditional Plan — it is the biblical plan."

Council of Bishops President Kenneth H. Carter said he is concerned the plan will cause progressive churches to leave the denomination. He said church leaders "will be doing a lot of outreach" to those churches.

The deep split within the church was evident in several fiery speeches opposing the Traditional Plan.

"If we bring this virus into our

church, it will bring illness to us all," said the Rev. Thomas Berlin of Herndon, Va. He predicted many Methodist churchgoers and some regional bodies would leave the church, while others would "stay and fight," performing same-sex weddings even if it meant punishment.

Formed in a merger in 1968, the United Methodist Church claims about 12.6 million members worldwide, including nearly 7 million in the United States.

NATION

Thousands ordered to leave amid Calif. storm

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Thousands of people along a flooded river were under evacuation orders Wednesday as a relentless storm pounded Northern California, drenching the San Francisco Bay Area and pummeling the Sierra Nevada with snow.

Some two dozen communities along the Russian River in Sonoma County were ordered evacuated Tuesday evening shortly before the waterway passed flood stage. Forecasters predicted it would peak at about 46 feet by Wednesday evening, which would be the highest level in about a quarter-century.

Authorities said evacuations were ordered for about 4,000 people in and around Guerneville, about an hour's drive north of San Francisco.

"We want you to leave now," Sheriff Mark Essick warned. "The roads may become impassable and you may not be able to get out. So even if you live in an area that is not flooding at this moment, you may not be able to get out when the water rises."

There also was concern about potential mudslides in hillsides areas saturated from days of



KENT PORTER, THE (SANTA ROSA, CALIF.) PRESS DEMOCRAT/AP

Residents of Armstrong Woods Road evacuate as the water rises Tuesday north of Guerneville, Calif. Two dozen communities are at risk of flooding from the Russian River north of San Francisco.

downpours and in areas scarred by 2017 wildfires.

Earlier in the day, a mudslide near Monte Rio near Guerneville trapped a man and a woman before they were rescued, messy but unharmed.

"Well I fell into the mud when the tree fell over the top of me. It happened so fast you don't even know, you know?" Kear Koch told KGO-TV.

Elsewhere in Sonoma County, several people had to be rescued from cars that became stranded while trying to drive through flooded roads, including one woman who was rescued by boat.

Guerneville often floods during heavy rain and people seemed nonchalant Tuesday about the

threat, said Joseph Chung, whose parents own the Koala's Fine Food restaurant.

"A couple of weeks ago people were using kayaks to get to their mailbox," Chung said. "If it gets really bad, we'll get out."

Several communities also were under evacuation orders in Butte County because of flooded creeks. Other waterways, including the Napa River, also were expected to overflow their banks as an ocean-spanning plume of moisture continued tracking through the West. It already closed roads and schools and toppled trucks and trees from Oregon to Montana.

The National Weather Service also issued flood warnings and flash flood watches for the San

Francisco Bay Area and many parts of the Sacramento area, lasting into Thursday morning.

Relentless rain forced the cancellation or delay of hundreds of flights in San Francisco, and the city of Santa Rosa received a record 5.66 inches of rain, making it the wettest day for the date since at least 1902.

In the Sierra Nevada, the California Department of Transportation reported that a maintenance yard above 6,000 feet had received 30 inches of snow Tuesday.

Several mountain and foothill roads were repeatedly closed because of issued flood warnings and to clear trucks and cars that spun out on the slippery pavement.

3 killed in train-vehicle collision on Long Island

Associated Press

WESTBURY, N.Y. — Two commuter trains traveling in opposite directions collided with a vehicle on the tracks in Westbury, killing all three occupants in the vehicle before one of the trains derailed and tore into a concrete platform Tuesday night, according to officials.

Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said the vehicle was "trying to beat the gate" when it was struck just before 7:30 p.m. He said one of the trains, which was carrying about 200 passengers and headed for Manhattan, was going at "full speed" when it crashed.

The train then leaves the track and takes out the platform and then hits the north side of the platform and takes off about 30 yards of concrete, which goes through the train," Ryder said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo called for a "full investigation into the collision," which also sent seven people on the trains to local hospitals with nonfatal injuries and forced the evacuation of nearly 1,000 passengers and crew on the two trains.

Long Island Rail Road President Phillip Eng said the vehicle went around the grade crossing and was struck by the train that was leaving Westbury station. He said the gates at the crossing were properly functioning.

"The gates were down, the lights were flashing. We've confirmed that they were functioning," he said. "Witnesses have said the vehicle went around the gates, at which point the train that was leaving, heading eastbound, and the vehicle collided."

A westbound train traveling toward Westbury then struck the vehicle, he said. The vehicle was pushed and that's when the front two cars of the westbound train came off the rails, Eng said.

Local TV news helicopter video showed the train cars standing upright after the wreck but with the forward cars off the rails. One end of one of the trains struck a station platform, crushing part of it.

Service was suspended in both directions on the Ronkonkoma and Huntington/Port Jefferson branches.

Passenger April Frazier, 31, of Brooklyn, was heading to Manhattan's Penn Station.

"I was sitting on the left side and all of a sudden the train really started rocking hard," Frazier told Newsday. "Flashes flared up on my side. I heard the conductor yell 'Brake, brake!' That's when I saw the flames."

Tuesday night's crash was the fifth incident at the crossing in the last 40 years, and the second involving a train hitting a vehicle, according to federal safety data. In the others, a person walking or standing on the tracks was hit by a train.

Stranded passengers banded together

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — When an Amtrak train with almost 200 people aboard hit downed trees during a blizzard and got stranded in the Oregon mountains for a day and a half, passengers and crew banded together during the ordeal that ended Tuesday.

"It was really nice to meet people pulling together," passenger Tracy Rhodes, of Scottsdale, Ariz., said in a phone interview after the train that had been traveling from Seattle to Los Angeles rolled back into the college town of Eugene, Ore., with a clanging bell announcing its arrival. Passengers spilled out, some waving their arms high in jubilation.

During the 36 hours that the train was stuck, younger passengers helped older ones reach their families to let them know they were all right, said Rhodes, who was traveling with her brother to visit their 82-year-old mother in Klamath Falls, Ore. A "mom brigade" was formed to take care of and entertain the children, she said.

"People were being very kind to each other, being friends," Rhodes said. "It restores your faith."



COURTESY OF EMILIE WYTRICK/AP

Passengers aboard a stranded Amtrak train make the best of their situation after the train hit downed trees during a blizzard in Oregon.

Coast Starlight train struck a tree that had fallen onto the tracks, Amtrak said.

Rhodes said the train stopped suddenly but not violently. She was told the engine hit several snow-laden trees and that one snapped back, damaging a hose assembly providing air pressure for the brakes. The train was re-

paired enough to move forward a short distance to Oakridge, Ore., a town 1,200 feet high in the Cascade Range that was dealing with its own problems — a blackout and snow- and debris-covered roads.

Railroad officials decided to keep the passengers on board. The hours ticked by. Some passengers grew impatient.

NATION

Ash loggers race against beetle infestation

By MICHAEL HILL
Associated Press

WALTON, N.Y. — Loggers in snowy forests are cutting down ash like there's no tomorrow, seeking to stay one step ahead of a fast-spreading beetle killing the tree in dozens of states.

The emerald ash borer has been chewing its way through trees from Maine to Colorado for about two decades, devastating a species prized for yielding a light-grained hardwood attractive enough for furniture and resilient enough for baseball bats.

Many hard-hit areas are east of the Mississippi River and north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Some fear areas in the invasion zone like upstate New York might have only five to seven years of ash logging left.

"Emerald ash borer is probably the most thorough killing machine that we've come across in my career over the last 35 years," said Tom Gerow, general manager for The Wagner Companies, which specializes in furniture-grade lumber.

Wagner is sawing ash at its mills at about double the rate it used to. And out in the woods, there's often



MICHAEL HILL/AP

Tom Gerow, a general manager at The Wagner Companies, inspects ash logs at the company's mill in Owego, N.Y. The emerald ash borer is decimating ash trees in dozens of states.

no reason to follow the common practice of leaving trees behind to regenerate the forest.

The beetle was first discovered stateside in 2002 in Michigan and has since destroyed tens of millions of ash trees in more than 30

states. It might have unwittingly been bought over from Asia in shipping pallets. No one knows for sure. But it's clear that the emerald ash borer kills almost every tree it attacks, from thick-canopied suburban shade trees to tall

pockets of ash in the woods.

Females lay eggs on ash bark and larval beetles bore looping tunnels just beneath, cutting the flow of trees' nutrients and water. At the Wagner mill in Owego, N.Y., squiggly scars from a lar-

val tunnel were partially exposed on a stacked log where the bark came off. The wood inside is still good for lumber, but the markings show the tree was on borrowed time.

Ash trees being cut down by a crew recently on a snowy hillside in Walton, west of the Catskill Mountains, still looked good. The thick trees shot straight up for dozens of feet before branching out. One freshly felled tree almost knee-high in diameter revealed a roughly 80-ring cross section that looked blonde and healthy.

Farther south, the situation is dire. In Maryland, exporter Mark Lipschitz said he can barely source ash anymore from southern Pennsylvania and Maryland.

"I have a standing order with my sawmill guys," said Lipschitz, owner of Nina Co. "I just tell them, 'I will take every stick of ash that you can supply.'"

There are no signs that the emerald ash borer will stop spreading anytime soon, with even states in the Northeast on guard.

Some see ash following the fate of the American chestnut, a once-prolific tree that was decimated by blight more than a century ago.

California: Immigration facilities lack oversight

By PAUL ELIAS
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Detainees confined to federal immigration detention facilities in California have inadequate access to health care, lawyers and family, state Attorney General Xavier Becerra said Tuesday.

Becerra was discussing the findings of a 147-page report prepared by his office that also found that detainees face long periods of confinement without breaks and language barriers in the 10 detention facilities state authorities inspected in 2017.

Becerra said the annual report released Tuesday is the first of 10 that the state Legislature requires of the California Department of Justice, which is tasked with inspecting all federal immigration detention facilities in the state. That law was one of three immigration-related "sanctuary state" bills passed in 2017 that the Trump administration unsuccessfully challenged in court.

Inspectors spent one day on scheduled visits at 10 facilities in operation in 2017. ICE contracted with four for-profit prison companies and six county sheriffs to house and care for the inmates.

Since then and amid growing protests, sheriffs in Sacramento and Contra Costa counties terminated their contracts with ICE to house federal immigration inmates in the local jails. A third facility near Baker, Calif., is also facing closure after the city of

"The safety, rights and health of detainees in ICE's care are of paramount concern."

Lori Haley
ICE spokeswoman

McFarland told ICE it would not renew its contract.

Becerra said many of the problems are caused by inadequate federal oversight. He said a common "challenge" inspectors found at most facilities included confining inmates to their cells for up to 22 hours a day. He noted that most of the detainees are not accused of crimes and are awaiting court decisions on their immigration status.

ICE spokeswoman Lori Haley said the private prison companies and county jails that house detainees "must meet rigorous performance standards."

"The safety, rights and health of detainees in ICE's care are of paramount concern, and all ICE detention facilities are subject to stringent, regular inspections," Haley said.

The attorney general's report estimated that 74,000 immigrant detainees have been held in California detention centers over a three-year period ending in 2017.



RIK BOWMER/AP

Republican state senator Jerry Stevenson is the sponsor of a bill that would allow Utah to do away with low-alcohol beers.

Changes brewing in Utah

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah lawmakers moved closer Tuesday to adopting alcohol levels for beer that are in line with most production-line brews sold around the country, despite opposition from the influential Mormon church.

The state Senate overwhelmingly passed the measure to raise low-alcohol limits Tuesday, though it's expected to face more opposition at the state House of Representatives.

"We still have a ways to go," said Kate Bradshaw, a lobbyist with the Responsible Beer Choice Coalition, a group of manufacturers, distributors and sellers who support the change.

The proposal would increase

the alcohol limit from 3.2 percent to 4.8 percent by weight, which would allow most standard beers to be sold in the state.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has expressed concern that the increase is too high. Most lawmakers are members of the faith that teaches abstinence from alcohol, and church positions can hold outsized sway.

Many local microbreweries also oppose the change. Still, supporters have included businesses like Wal-Mart, and the change overwhelmingly passed the state Senate.

Republican sponsor Sen. Jerry Stevenson has argued the bill is about commerce rather than alcohol.

Big buyer of Girl Scouts cookies faces drug charges

Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S.C. — A South Carolina man who bought more than 120 boxes of Girl Scouts cookies to help the Scouts escape the cold has been arrested on drug charges.

News outlets reported the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency said Detric Lee McGowan, 46, was arrested Tuesday on charges including conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and cocaine. The agency said McGowan is the same man who appeared in a photo that garnered thousands of views and shares online.

Kayla Dillard had shared the photo on Facebook, saying the man paid \$540 in cash for all the girls' cookies so they could escape the cold outside a store near Greenville, S.C. She said she didn't get the man's name.

An indictment issued last week said McGowan, also known as "Fat," is one of several suspects in an ongoing drug investigation. It said he and 10 other people conspired to import drugs from Mexico in late 2018. The U.S. Attorney's Office says authorities are still searching for one of the suspects.

McGowan was being held at a Spartanburg County detention center. It's unclear if he has a lawyer.

WORLD

Pakistan says 2 Indian warplanes downed in Kashmir

By ROSHAN MUGHAL
AND ALIAZ HUSSAIN
Associated Press

MUZAFARABAD, Pakistan — Pakistan's military said Wednesday it shot down two Indian warplanes in the disputed region of Kashmir and captured a pilot, raising tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals to a level unseen in the last two decades.

India acknowledged one of its air force planes was "lost" in skirmishes with Pakistan and that its pilot was "missing in action" on a chaotic day which also saw mortar shells fired by Indian troops from across the frontier dividing the two sectors of Kashmir kill six civilians and wound several others. A helicopter crash in the region also killed six Indian air force officials and a civilian on the ground.

Pakistan responded by shutting down its civilian airspace as Prime Minister Imran Khan called for negotiations with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, to ensure "better sense can prevail."

"Let's sit together to talk to find a solution," Khan said. There was no immediate reaction from Modi.

The aircraft went down Wednesday morning in Kashmir, a mountainous region claimed by both India and Pakistan since almost immediately after their creation in 1947. One of the downed planes crashed in Pakistan's part of Kashmir while the other went down in an Indian-controlled section of the Himalayan region, Pakistani army spokesman Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor said.

Pakistani troops on the ground captured an Indian pilot, he later

said, after earlier saying it captured two. He did not explain what caused the confusion.

The pilot was injured and was being treated at a military hospital, Ghafoor said. He did not elaborate beyond saying the pilots were being "treated well" and made no mention of them being returned to India.

"We have no intention of escalation, but are fully prepared to do so if forced into that paradigm," he added.

India's External Affairs Ministry spokesman, Ravesh Kumar, said one of its MIG-21 fighter aircraft was missing. He said India was still "ascertaining" whether its pilot was in Pakistan's custody. He said one Pakistani aircraft was shot down, something Pakistan denied.

Meanwhile, Indian police said officials recovered seven bodies from the wreckage of an Indian Air Force chopper that crashed in an Indian-controlled sector of Kashmir, which included six Indian airmen and a civilian on the ground. They gave no cause for the crash.

Senior police officer Munir Ahmed Khan said the chopper crashed close to an airport Wednesday in the Budgam area, in the outskirts of the region's main city of Srinagar. The Srinagar airport, which has been shut along with two other airports for civilian flights in the region, is also an air force station.

Eyewitnesses said soldiers fired in the air to keep residents away from the crash site.

Hours later, Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority said it shut Pakistani airspace to all commercial flights on Wednesday.



NARIMAN EL-MOFTY/AP

Policemen stand guard in front of a damaged train inside Ramsis train station in Cairo on Wednesday after at least 25 people were reportedly killed and dozens injured in a railcar crash and explosion.

Locomotive crashes, burns at Cairo's main train station

By MAGGIE MICHAEL
Associated Press

CAIRO — A locomotive crashed into a barrier at Cairo's main train station at high speed Wednesday, causing its fuel tank to explode and triggering a huge fire, leaving at least 25 people dead, officials said.

Railway officials said the single railcar was traveling too fast when it collided head-on with the barrier. At least 47 people were also injured.

The explosion and fire blasted through people on the platform in the busy Ramses Station in downtown Cairo. A surveillance video showed the moment of impact when the car barreled past men and women walking by who are then engulfed in flames and smoke. Charred bodies lay on the

platform, and a man in flames ran down a staircase in panic, according to other photos and videos posted on social media.

There was no immediate word on whether the crash was the result of a terrorist act. However, one railway official said it was too early to rule it out. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Ashraf Montaz, a general railway inspector, told The Associated Press that there were several scenarios for what happened and one was that someone could have set the rail car on high speed, then jumped.

It was not immediately clear if the locomotive had a driver at the time of the crash, Montaz said.

"The railcar takes time to

(gather) speed so there is a chance that someone set it on full speed before leaving," he said, adding that investigators are considering all scenarios.

"There are records that show which driver is in which railcar," he said. In general, he said, the accident signals "negligence from the driver and supervisors."

Ambulances rushed to the scene and firefighters struggled to get the flames under control.

Egypt General Prosecutor Nabil Sadek ordered an extensive investigation and sent a team of investigators to the station.

Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli said authorities must determine "who caused the accident and hold that person accountable." He promised "harsh punishment" for the culprits.

Nigerian president re-elected; opponent vows challenge

Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria — Nigeria's president was declared the clear winner of a second term in Africa's largest democracy early Wednesday after a campaign in which he urged voters to give him another chance to tackle gaping corruption, widespread insecurity and an economy limping back from a rare recession.

While many frustrated Nigerians had said they wanted to give someone new a try, President Muhammadu Buhari, a former military dictator, profited from his upright reputation in an oil-rich nation weary of politicians enriching themselves instead of the people.

Top opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar, a billionaire former vice president who made sweep-

ing campaign promises to "make Nigeria work again," quickly rejected the result of what he called a "sham election" and said he would challenge it in court.

As many Nigerians awakened to the win along with the morning prayer, Buhari told colleagues he was "deeply humbled." He regretted the loss of dozens of lives in election-related violence.

"I will like to make a special appeal to my supporters not to gloat or humiliate the opposition. Victory is enough reward for your efforts," he said.

The president pledged that his administration will intensify its efforts in security, economic restructuring and fighting corruption.

"We will strive to strengthen our unity and inclusiveness so that no section or group will feel

left behind or left out," he said.

In a statement shared by aides, challenger Abubakar said he would have conceded "within seconds" if the vote had been free and fair. Instead he alleged "manifest and premeditated malpractices" in many of Nigeria's 36 states.

He asserted that voting was suppressed in his strongholds in the south and that states threatened by an extremist insurgency generated "much higher voter turnouts" than in peaceful ones. He also objected to the deployment of the military in some areas.

One domestic election observer, the Civic Media Lab, noted that "contrary to normal reasoning" the state most affected by extremist attacks, Borno, saw a 13 percent increase in voter turnout, citing electoral commission data.



BEN CURTIS/AP

Young supporters of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari celebrate his electoral win in the streets of Kano, northern Nigeria, on Wednesday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

20 tons of chickens burn in highway fire

GA ATLANTA — Around 20 tons of chicken were roasted on a highway near Atlanta when a tractor-trailer caught fire. The Georgia Department of Transportation announced on Twitter that all southbound lanes on Interstate 285 in Cobb County reopened just before 7 a.m. Tuesday, around three hours after the fire started.

The truck's driver, Micesh Kamal, told WSB-TV that the chicken was bound for California from Georgia. He pulled over when he saw smoke and opened the back of the truck to find flames in every direction.

Zoo elephant dies after confrontation

FL MIAMI — Officials at a Florida zoo said an African elephant died shortly after a confrontation with another elephant.

Zoo Miami posted on Facebook that the 50-year-old female, Cita, died Friday evening.

Officials said Cita was suffering from a variety of age-related issues that contributed to her inability to stand after being knocked down by the other elephant and eventually led to her death from a suspected thrown blood clot.

Experts say elephants are social animals with strict hierarchies. Confrontations to reinforce an individual's status are not uncommon.

Ex-letter carrier pleads guilty to mail theft

LA NEW ORLEANS — A former letter carrier in New Orleans nabbed by U.S. Postal Service agents in an investigation involving marked cash and trackable gift cards has pleaded guilty to theft.

The plea agreement for Courtney Duplessis, 30, says she could get up to five years in prison for the pleaded guilty last week to one count of mail theft, with six charges to be dropped.

Complaints about delivery on Duplessis' route led to last year's probe. Investigators used gift cards and marked cash in "test" mail. One mailing included a device that alerted agents when it was opened, leading them to observe her buying a meal with marked cash.

NYC Citi Bike found covered in barnacles

NY NEW YORK — A New York City resident said he found a Citi Bike covered in barnacles while he was trying to grab a bike for a ride.

The 36-year-old man said he raced over to the bike rack by his house to grab the bike that was listed there Saturday. WNBC-TV reported the bike he found was completely rusted over and covered in barnacles.

The bike was docked on 73rd Street and Riverside Drive. Georgetown said the bike looked like it had just been fished out of

THE CENSUS

73 The number of dead coyotes discovered behind a subdivision in Charlotte, N.C., that a wildlife officer thinks were brought from a different location after a hunt. North Carolina wildlife enforcement officer Sampson Parker said Monday the carcasses were piled in a heap on the ground next to a ditch that leads to a stream in Charlotte. Two residents found them Feb. 21 on the site of an old wastewater treatment plant. The city bought the property and locked it up. Mecklenburg County workers said there is no evidence the carcasses affected the water.



JOHN ANTCEAN/AP

Pierside attraction

Spectators view the cruiser USS Lake Champlain anchored off the Malibu Pier in Malibu, Calif., on Sunday.

the river.

Citi Bike said the bike has been removed from circulation.

Court allows music festival at speedway

NH CONCORD — The state Supreme Court has affirmed that the New Hampshire Motor Speedway can hold a planned country music festival on its grounds, rejecting concerns about potential noise raised by people who live near the track.

The neighbors cited a 1989 agreement that prohibits the Loudon track from hosting concerts that aren't tied to racing events. But a judge in 2018 found that property bought after 1989 and zoned for concerts and outdoor events isn't part of the agreement.

The Supreme Court affirmed that ruling on Feb. 21 and the decision was released Monday.

Loudon officials granted permission for the three-day concert to be held later this year. The plans were approved after the speedway learned it was losing the September top-tier NASCAR race to Las Vegas.

Police: Teen in stolen car in 40-mile chase

MA MALDEN — Authorities said a 17-year-old who doesn't have a driver's license led police on a more than 40-mile chase in a stolen car.

Massachusetts State Police said a woman flagged down a trooper around 12:15 a.m. Monday and said her car had been stolen in Malden.

Police located the car, but the driver took off. The police said the teen drove erratically at high speeds, eventually crossing into New Hampshire. Officers continued to pursue the car, which crashed while trying to exit a highway. Police said the teen fled on foot before being captured.

He was taken to the hospital for evaluation. Police said he'll face charges including failure to stop for police.

Police cars rammed, deputy hurt in chase

MO MOORHEAD — A 30-year-old Fargo man is in custody following a

chase in the metro area in which he allegedly rammed squad cars and injured an officer.

Authorities said the suspect fled in a stolen vehicle when officers responded to a burglary call in the West Fargo area about 1 a.m. Monday. The chase went through Fargo and across the Minnesota border into Moorhead and Dilworth and back into Moorhead, where the man was arrested.

Clay County Sheriff Mark Empting told KFGO radio the suspect intentionally rammed two squad vehicles during the pursuit, injuring a deputy. Empting said the deputy was treated at a Fargo hospital and released.

University to allow dogs in residence hall

PA PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia's La Salle University says it will let students keep dogs as pets in a college residence hall starting this fall.

The idea grew from a twice-anual event where faculty and staff are encouraged to bring their pets to work to mingle with the student body. Philly.com reported schools locally and nationally — includ-

ing La Salle — already allow dogs and other pets if they are required for therapeutic reasons or if they are service animals.

La Salle will allow dogs in St. George Hall, a 55-bed upper-classmen residence hall with single and double rooms. Roommates must agree to a dog and pets can be walked around campus on a leash.

Change would allow Sunday liquor sales

MS GREENWOOD — A city in the Mississippi Delta could decide whether to allow restaurants to sell liquor on Sundays.

The Greenwood Commonwealth reported that Greenwood Mayor Carolyn McAdams is urging the City Council to consider the change. Under a current city ordinance, restaurants may sell beer but not liquor on Sundays.

The proposed changes would affect only restaurants with liquor licenses and would not change the ban on package store sales of alcohol on Sundays.

From wire reports

FACES



TAYLOR JEWELL, INVISION/AP

From left: Wade Robson, "Leaving Neverland" director Dan Reed and James Safechuck promote the documentary Jan. 24 at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Michael Jackson accuses Robson and Safechuck say that the Sundance Film Festival is first time they've ever felt public support for their allegations that the King of Pop molested them when they were children.

'Finding' fallout

Personal challenges beset Michael Jackson accusers as documentary goes mainstream

BY AMY KAUFMAN
Los Angeles Times

They'd told their stories before, first in the quiet confines of therapists' offices, then explicitly in court documents.

But Wade Robson and James Safechuck never felt truly heard until they stood in front of a crowd applauding them at the Sundance Film Festival in late January. After the premiere of "Leaving Neverland," the four-hour docu-series in which both men allege they suffered years of sexual abuse at the hands of Michael Jackson when they were boys, hundreds of festivalgoers rose to their feet to applaud the film's subjects.

"It's strange to hear people clap," said Safechuck, 40.

"Yeah, you kind of don't know what to do with it at first," added Robson, 36. "There's a lot of release happening for me. There's been a lot of tears. There's tiredness. But this is a sea change moment for me in this healing journey and in trying to be heard. And it's happened, and that's incredible."

Only a clutch of Jackson fans had turned up at Sundance to protest the docu-series, which will begin its two-night HBO run stateside on March 3. But online, his legion of supporters were already beginning what Reed described as a "fatwa," launching websites and Twitter threads to lay out why they believe Robson and Safechuck are liars.

Even before the festival, Jackson's estate slammed "Leaving Neverland" as "yet another lurid production in an outrageous and pathetic attempt to exploit and cash in on Michael Jackson." In the following weeks, the estate has only ramped up its defense, releasing a 10-page letter slamming HBO for airing the project.

But HBO is not wavering, and the critical reaction to "Leaving Neverland" was so strong that the network briefly explored an awards-qualifying theatrical run. A motion picture academy rule barring "multi-part" documentaries from consideration — adopted after the docu-series "O.J.: Made in America" won the Oscar in 1979 — meant that wasn't to be.

Still, the exposure on HBO is sure to ignite fierce debates. The main argument against Safechuck and Robson's credibility centers on the fact that both men previously testified on Jackson's behalf in child sex abuse cases brought against him by other boys. In 1993, when Robson was 11 and Safechuck just a few years older, both said they told investigators that Jackson had never been sexually inappropriate with them. At 22, Robson reiterated that position again under oath in 2005, subsequently sitting for numerous television interviews in which he spoke positively about Jackson.

As "Leaving Neverland" details, both men now say they were under immense pressure from Jackson and his lawyers to keep quiet.

Robson said he was sexually abused by Jackson from age 7, shortly after he won a 1987 Australian competition in which he mimicked the performer's dancing. Safechuck, who met Jackson that same year on the set of a Pepsi commercial, says Jackson started molesting him when he was 10 years old.

Robson and Safechuck crossed paths a couple of times as boys — once on the set of Jackson's 1991 music video, "Jam," and another time at the singer's Neverland Ranch, where he had organized a weekend with the filmmaker Robert Wise. But they never knew each other well.

In 2013, when Robson filed a lawsuit against Jackson's estate and companies claiming the singer had sexually abused him as a boy, Safechuck felt seen. In the docu-series, he describes how Robson's legal efforts inspired him to speak out and begin his own legal battle in 2014.

Safechuck was desperate to connect with Robson over what court documents revealed to be shared childhood trauma. But due to their respective lawsuits, they had to keep their distance. The men were allowed to meet for a lawyer-supervised lunch about five years ago, though they could barely share any details about their boyhood experiences with Jackson.

"The first thing we did was just hug each other for, like, five minutes," Robson remembered.



AMOS PICTURES, IMDB/TNS

Michael Jackson and Wade Robson in "Leaving Neverland."

Director Dan Reed first approached the men about "Leaving Neverland" in 2016, after the filmmaker learned about their lawsuits. Both men's mothers and wives are also interviewed in the film, as are Robson's siblings and even his grandmother. No representatives for Jackson — who was never convicted of sexual abuse — were included in the film.

Robson said he believes it's been difficult for people to think Jackson could have been a pedophile because of his level of stardom, which made him almost inhuman.

"People put him on some sort of pedestal that was just seemingly invincible," he said. "And in my experience with him, he had some great qualities about him. He had some real levels of kindness and compassion about him. And then at the same time, a real twisted, sick urge and lack of any capability to stop himself from doing these horrible things to myself and James and I believe many other kids."

"I think, for us, instead of looking for people to mute Michael or whatever — I think it's more of presenting an opportunity for people to reevaluate who they consider their idols," said Safechuck. "Who do we assign to look up to? Because you can write an amazing song doesn't mean you should be people's moral compass."

Safechuck said he's trying to set "healthy expectations" for the release of "Leaving Neverland" in order to protect himself from any further backlash.

"I think the act of being heard is an accomplishment," he said. "And if good comes of that for other people, that's an accomplishment. And that's it."

German arena cancels April R. Kelly concert

From wire services

A German concert arena canceled its contract Tuesday with the organizer of an R. Kelly tour, days after the R&B star was charged in the United States with sexually abusing four people, including three underage girls, dating back to 1998.

"Regarding the new and objective facts, we have decided to cancel the contract," Ratiopharm Arena in Neu-Ulm wrote on its Facebook page. The operators of the arena had already removed advertisements for an April 12 concert from Facebook on Monday.

The operator of the Sporthalle Hamburg arena, where another German concert is planned for April 14, said Tuesday that they were still pressing Kelly's tour organizer in Germany to cancel the concert as they had been doing even before Kelly was officially charged.

Rotten Tomatoes discontinues public reviews pre-release

The review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes is no longer allowing the public to post reviews of a movie prior to its theatrical release. The move is partly to push back against the influence of online trolls.

The company said Tuesday that it is one of a series of changes, including making the "want to see" score a raw number instead of a percentage.

Previously, anyone could leave written comments or reviews for a movie before its release. Occasionally this would result in an onslaught of negativity from people who had yet to see a film.

This function will now only be open once a movie hits theaters. Eventually, Rotten Tomatoes says, audience reviews will be synced up with verified ticket purchases.

Other news

■ **Philip Pullman's** next novel will bring us closer to a more independent Lyra Silvertongue, his longtime literary heroine. "The Secret Commonwealth" will be published Oct. 3 in the U.S. and the U.K. by imprints of Penguin Random House. The novel is the second of Pullman's "Book of Dust" series and is set 20 years after the first volume, "La Belle Sauvage."

■ The son of slain rapper XXXTentacion was born Jan. 26 at a South Florida hospital. The baby's 20-year-old mother, Jenessa Sanchez, tells Miami television station WPLG that she named the boy Gekyume, which the rapper made up before he was fatally shot June 18 during an apparent robbery near Fort Lauderdale. She says the name means a "different state or next universe of thought."

■ Janet Jackson is heading to Las Vegas. The singer announced on Tuesday that she will launch her first residency there this summer. Titled "Metamorphosis," the 15 dates will take place at the Park Theater at Park MGM, beginning May 17.

■ Mexican director **Alejandro Gonzales Inarritu** will preside over the jury at the Cannes Film Festival in May. Inarritu is the first Mexican to be given the honor.

■ Former first daughter **Jenna Bush Hager** will be permanently taking on co-hosting duties of the fourth hour of the "Today Show" along with Hoda Kotb.

■ **Jeraline Saunders**, whose book "Love Boats" about romance and adventure aboard a cruise ship inspired the long-running prime-time comedy-drama "The Love Boat," has died of complications from kidney stone surgery. She was 96.

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OPINION

Shanahan could succeed – if he serves all of us

By DAVID IGNATIUS
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

In the days after he resigned as secretary of defense in December, Jim Mattis told people he hoped to be succeeded by Pat Shanahan, his deputy. Shanahan has remained in limbo since the beginning of the year as acting secretary, perhaps trying to convince President Donald Trump's critics that he will be independent, the way Mattis was, while simultaneously reassuring the White House that he won't.

Trump appears almost ready to name Shanahan permanently. Wendt Gingrich, one of Trump's confidants, told me approvingly this week: "Shanahan is probably the best manager to be secretary of defense we've seen in many years. He has a deep understanding about how we need to rethink big systems to be able to compete."

But who is Shanahan? What strengths and weaknesses would he bring to the government's second-toughest job, after commander in chief? Shanahan has never served in the military, has been in government just 19 months and, despite 31 years as a successful engineer at Boeing, was never chief executive there or anywhere else.

Two basic conclusions about Shanahan emerged from a dozen interviews about him with Pentagon insiders over the past month. Internally, he may be precisely what the Pentagon needs — a tough manager who's prepared to break some rice bowls to reform what the military buys and spends, and drag it fully into the 21st century.

"I'm used to being directive. I'm relen-

less," Shanahan told me in an interview this month. The Pentagon needs that tough management style.

But Shanahan's prospects are murkier as an external manager, dealing with the White House and key foreign allies and adversaries. The questions are especially important when it comes to his ability to calm a legendary Trump.

Mattis, a legendary former Marine general, saw part of his job as talking Trump out of ill-formed impulses. Shanahan can't call on the same gravitas. His eagerness to show public loyalty to Trump on issues such as border security and Syria could limit his ability to push back against his boss in private.

Hard-nosed management is essential at the Pentagon. Defense weapons systems and employee benefits are far too expensive, and the gargantuan Pentagon budget masks what's often gross misuse of money that prevents spending on technologies to counter Russia and China.

Shanahan says he understands the problem and is trying to fix it. Some examples gathered by members of his staff:

■ **Readiness.** Shanahan decided to focus on aviation maintenance, something he knew about from Boeing. He found that the "mission-capable rate" for Navy P-8 submarine chasers, adapted from 737s, is 65 percent or less. Rates for some fighter jets are even lower.

Readiness rates like that would be inconceivable at Boeing or a commercial airline, so Shanahan demanded change. Last summer, over protest from the military, Mattis set the target mission-capable rate at 80 percent — still too low, but a big improvement.

■ **Bureaucratic overhead.** The Penta-

Does a universal draft make sense for our security?

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

Last week, a district court judge ruled that it is unconstitutional for only men to have to register with the Selective Service, opening the possibility that women might also have to register.

The ruling may be fair in principle, but does it make sense? Would a universal draft best serve the security of the United States? Or would it be yet another exercise in asserting equality of the sexes to advance primarily social, not military, goals?

I should qualify all this by noting that the military always wants more bodies at its disposal — and high-ranking Pentagon women have long lobbied for full inclusion at every level of military engagement in part because, without combat experience, women couldn't compete with men for the highest military rankings.

Yet when now-retired Gen. Ann Dunwoody became the first female four-star officer in 2008, the combat exclusion of women was still in place. Although Dunwoody's service was extraordinary, including being the first female battalion commander in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, she, like most military women, never engaged in direct ground combat, as defined by the Department of Defense. More on this shortly.

U.S. District Judge Gray Miller's ruling seems to make sense in a fair-is-fair kind of way. But fair isn't always absolutely fair, and, as Dickens wrote, the law is still an ass. For a better understanding of what's at stake, it would be constructive to review the history of the draft. At this juncture, meanwhile, nothing has changed. The government probably will appeal the decision and then, likely, the Supreme Court will take a stab.

This entire debate isn't really about military preparedness but is about social engineering — changing the way people perceive things so that they can be arranged according to the designs of a relatively very few.

It seems improbable in light of precedent that the high court would find against Miller. The Texas judge specifically mentioned Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's 1990 opinion in the United States v. Virginia, in which she concluded that excluding women from Virginia Military Institute violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

Yet earlier, in 1981's *Rostker v. Goldberg*, the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of excluding women from the Selective Service System's male-only policy. Noting that the purpose of the registry was to allow the government to raise a combat army — and given that women weren't then allowed in combat — the court wrote that the two sexes "are simply not similarly situated for purposes of a draft or registration for a draft." Thus, constitutionality wasn't an issue.

Much has changed since the 20th century, at least culturally, and the question is whether Rostker would still stand given those changes. For one thing, since 2015, all military jobs have been opened to women, including direct combat.

No sane person has ever argued that

gon's costs are high partly because it insists on doing so many things in-house. Six of the top 10 entities doing business with the Pentagon are defense agencies.

Shanahan pressed Chief Management Officer John H. Gibson, the Pentagon's No. 3 official, to combine or eliminate regulations for procurement, performance and financial operations. Gibson didn't deliver what Shanahan wanted, and he was forced to resign in November.

■ **2020 budget.** Shanahan's biggest test yet will be the budget for the fiscal year that begins in October. Plans call for buying two new aircraft carriers, a vastly expensive purchase of what critics say are vulnerable platforms. Shanahan opposed buying the carriers but settled for a compromise: The Navy will shelve plans to rehab one of its mid-life carriers, potentially saving as much as \$4 billion.

■ **Space.** Shanahan found a way to melt Trump's passionate desire to create a Space Force with the equally fervent desire of the Air Force and its congressional allies to strangle this offspring. He reassured both sides: The Space Force will be contained within the Air Force Department, much as the Marine Corps is part of the Navy. But there will be a new Space Development Agency to give an independent prod to acquisition of advanced technology.

Shanahan's gift is clearly his ability to straddle. But he would make a mistake if he thought he was playing to an audience of one. The president's support is important for any Cabinet official, but the secretary of defense has a crucial role in reassuring allies, managing the military and deterring adversaries. If Shanahan is seen as Trump's yes man, he loses his clout.

women aren't as brave as men or that they lack any other qualities or values necessary to military success. But in discussing women's expanding military roles, we return to the question of what ground combat really means. As the Defense Department defined it in 1994, it means "engaging an enemy on the ground ... while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force's personnel."

What changed in 2015? Nothing — except the definition of combat, which the Pentagon altered so that civilians could pretend that this is not a travesty. It took only a generation or so for the culture to be manipulated into believing that women are equal to men not just under the law but in every conceivable way. This is, of course, a purely political abstraction with existential consequences.

Moreover, this entire debate isn't really about military preparedness but is about social engineering — changing the way people perceive things so that they can be arranged according to the designs of a relatively very few. What's missing from all such cultural arguments is the full appreciation of human nature, which remains essentially the same through most of time. Progressives will twist themselves into balloon poodles trying to codify gender differences, but heaven forbid we should speak of sex differences, not to mention cultural adaptations to better ensure survival of the species.

Maybe no 18-year-old American "woman" will ever be conscripted or ordered to fight men mano a mano, but it seems more than a possibility at this point. I'm going to go out on a limb and simply say that a civilized nation doesn't put its women in combat where they have an unequal ability to survive.

How's that for your equality equation?

BUSINESS/WEATHER



RICHARD DREW/AP

A federal appeals court has blessed AT&T's takeover of Time Warner, saying the \$81 billion merger won't harm consumers or competition in the booming pay TV market.

Court OKs \$81B merger

Says AT&T's takeover of Time Warner won't harm consumers

By MARCY GORDON AND TALİ ARBEL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court on Tuesday cleared AT&T's takeover of Time Warner, rejecting the Trump administration's claims that the \$81 billion deal will harm consumers and reduce competition in the TV industry.

The ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington came in the high-stakes competition case, approving one of the biggest media marriages ever. It was already completed last spring, soon after a federal trial judge approved it.

AT&T, a wireless carrier and TV and home internet provider, absorbed Time Warner, the owner of CNN, HBO, the Warner Bros. movie studio, "Game of Thrones," sports programming and other shows.

Many observers had expected the decision favorable to AT&T from the three-judge appeals court panel. The decision was unanimous to uphold the trial judge's June ruling.

Opposing the merger forced the Justice Department to argue against standing legal doctrine that favors mergers among companies that don't compete directly with each other, what's known as a vertical merger.

The U.S. antitrust lawsuit against Dallas-based AT&T marked the first time in decades that the government has challenged that doctrine by suing to block a vertical merger.

The ruling dealt a major setback to the Trump Justice Department. The department said it won't appeal the ruling.

Brick by brick, Lego rebounds from 2017

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — For Lego, the pieces are coming back together.

The Danish toy maker said Wednesday its revenue rose 4 percent last year to \$5.5 billion after a tough 2017. Net profit increased 3.5 percent to \$1.2 billion.

Growth was in the "strong double-digits" in China and "in the low-single digits" in the United States and western Europe.

CEO Niels B. Christiansen said the privately held company has been recovering from a slump in 2017, when sales fell for the first time since 2004 from record highs. He said the company had reached its goal "to stabilize the business."

Lego had "delivered modest top- and bottom-line growth," Christiansen said.

"We are especially encouraged by our progress given the challenges facing the toy industry and the departure of specialist retailers such as Toys 'R Us" that went under last year, said Christiansen. "These shifts gave us the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with retailers and find new ways to connect with shoppers and consumers across digital and physical channels."

physical channels.

"We also grew market share in our largest markets around the world, bucking industry trends," he added.

The company, based in Billund, Denmark, said it was planning to open 80 stores in 18 Chinese cities in 2019, starting with a new flagship store in Beijing which opened Feb. 22. It would also further expand its presence in the Middle East and countries with a growing middle class.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 28)	\$1.1685
Dollar buys (Feb. 28)	49.8558
British pound (Feb. 28)	\$1.37
Egypt (Pound) (Feb. 28)	108.90
South Korean won (Feb. 28)	1,089.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3323
Canada (Dollar)	1.3144
China (Yuan)	6.6849
Denmark (Krone)	6.5548
Egypt (Pound)	17.5170
Euro	\$1.1382/0.8786
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8466
Hungary (Forint)	278.05
Israel (Shekel)	3.6226
Japan (Yen)	110.82
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3037
Norway (Krone)	8.5334
Philippines (Peso)	51.81
Poland (Zloty)	3.79
Saudi (Riyal)	3.7493
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3481
South Korea (Won)	1,119.72
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8988
Thailand (Baht)	31.42
Turkey (Lira)	5.3039

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom or nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 26, 2019

Dow Jones industrials	-33.97
	26,057.98
Nasdaq composite	-5.16
	7,549.30
Standard & Poor's 500	-2.21
	2,793.90
Russell 2000	-11.33
	1,577.48

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	2.40
3-month bill	0.38
30-year bond	3.01

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Frazz



Dilbert



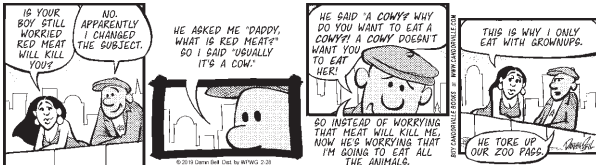
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



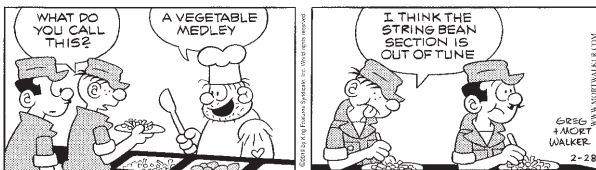
Candorville



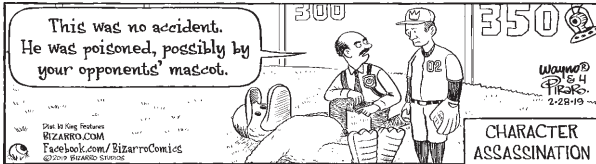
Carpe Diem



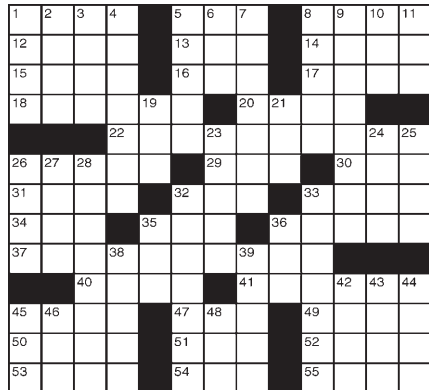
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Earring site
- 5 Smack
- 8 Blog entry
- 12 Regrettably
- 13 Fuss
- 14 "May It Be" singer
- 15 Dealer's foe
- 16 Moving-day rental
- 17 Aviation prefix
- 18 Energetic person
- 20 Gallery supply
- 22 Strikers' queue
- 26 Manhandled
- 29 Chemical suffix
- 30 Hobbyist's abbr.
- 31 Rue the run
- 32 German conjunction
- 33 Lush party
- 34 — Paulo
- 35 Fuel stat
- 36 Devil's domain
- 37 Playgoer's souvenir
- 40 Writer Quindlen
- 41 Short jacket
- 45 Gambling game
- 47 Jay follower
- 49 San —, Italy
- 50 Help a crook
- 51 Hosp. sections
- 52 Author Sheehy

- 53 Striped fish
- 54 Perched
- 55 Deco artist

DOWN

- 1 Crow's-nest cry
- 2 Skin care brand
- 3 Hoedown site
- 4 Jailbreak participant
- 5 Mayhem
- 6 Greek mountain
- 7 Ad nauseam
- 8 Oyster's prize
- 9 Biased
- 10 Aleppo's land (Abbr.)
- 11 Eastern "way"
- 19 Central
- 21 Consumed
- 23 Monarchs constellation
- 24 Evening, in an ad
- 25 Peepers
- 26 Bygone days
- 27 Exotic berry
- 28 "So what?"
- 32 Chimney pipes
- 33 Maker of ornate eggs
- 35 Gents
- 36 Coloration
- 38 Shoelace woes
- 39 Secret rendezvous
- 42 Dread
- 43 Send forth
- 44 Portrayal
- 45 "Terrific!"
- 46 Lawyers' gp.
- 48 Altar

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-28

CRYPTOQUIP

MUYUJJUE EK IGQR MU
PQIMTJK Q WTRPS UD GQJAK,
DGQM DHBS. ZKB, EK'GG WK

PQMPSHRA BUYK IQJB.

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF ELMER FUDD IS BEING HEAVILY TEASED BY BUGS BUNNY, HE MIGHT BE HAVING A BAD HARE DAY.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals F


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NHL

Roster revamp: Wild go younger

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The patience Minnesota Wild general manager Paul Fenton exercised last summer during his first off-season in charge has yielded to a more aggressive approach.

Fenton's conclusion about the roster he inherited has become clear: The Wild needed to change their core of forwards before making some long-awaited advances down the Stanley Cup championship-contending track.

Over the last six weeks, Fenton has dealt Nino Niederreiter, Charlie Coyle and Mikael Granlund leading up to the NHL trade deadline that passed Monday and served notice that the reshaping process will likely resume once the season is over.

Reaching the playoffs six straight times to match Anaheim for the longest active streak in the Western Conference has only produced two series wins, and Coyle and Granlund were on all six of those teams. Niederreiter was on all but one.

"That's what I was brought here for, to make some changes," Fenton said, later adding: "It has nothing to do with cap space or anything. It has to do with the talent level and where we are."

Niederreiter, Coyle and Granlund, all of whom were drafted in the first round in 2010, were each shipped off at age 26, just entering their prime years, but they each fetched a forward in his early 20s. By average age at the start of the season, no team in the league was older than the Wild.

"We were trying to get younger, faster and more skilled," Fenton said, "and the last couple of acquisitions have done that."

Here's the twist: The Wild are still in control of a postseason spot. They're tied with Colorado for eighth place with 19 games remaining for each team, taking a three-game winning streak to Winnipeg for a matchup Tuesday with the Central Division leader.

"I think that this team has the potential to make the playoffs,"

Fenton said, "and if you make the playoffs, you never know."

Niederreiter was sent to Carolina on Jan. 17 for Victor Rask (age 25), who had only one goal and one assist in 10 games after the trade until suffering a lower-body injury that has kept him out of the last six games. Niederreiter, meanwhile, has nine goals and six assists in 16 games for the Hurricanes.

But on Wednesday, Coyle was swapped for Boston's Ryan Donato (age 22), who has one goal and three assists in three games. Fenton said he noticed a "different energy" since that deal. Granlund went to Nashville for Kevin Fiala (age 22). The trades, plus the season-ending knee injury to captain Mikko Koivu, have elevated the roles of youngsters Joel Eriksson Ek, Jordan Greenway and Luke Kunin.

Predators coach Peter Laviolette moved Fiala, who has 32 points in 64 games, up one line the past two games to play with Filip Forsberg and Ryan Johansen. Fiala had two overtime goals in the playoffs before turning 21 and scored five times in his first 18 playoff games, but he broke his leg in a second-round game against St. Louis in 2017 when Nashville reached the Stanley Cup finals. Fiala followed up with a career-best season in 2017-18 with 23 goals, 48 points, 13 power-play points and 80 games, but the 11th overall pick in the 2014 draft is a dismal minus-11 this season with only 10 goals.

Fenton drafted him as the assistant general manager for the Predators, however, and remained sold on his potential to provide the unique skill and speed on the rush that the Wild have been lacking.

Fenton, who also reached a deal with center Eric Staal on a two-year extension after deciding not to trade him and his expiring contract, apologized for the timing of the Granlund deal. His fiancée went into labor Monday, expecting their first child. Granlund also had his 27th birthday Tuesday.



JIM MONE/AP

The Minnesota Wild reached a deal with center Eric Staal on a two-year extension after deciding not to trade him.



PAUL VERNON/AP

The Columbus Blue Jackets decided to hold on to forward Artemi Panarin at the trade deadline, even though Panarin is expected to leave Columbus for a big free-agent payday after the season.

Flurry of moves shows Jackets want to win now

By MITCH STACY
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Columbus Blue Jackets have made it clear they don't want to wait any longer to make a serious Stanley Cup run.

In a series of moves before Monday's trade deadline, the Blue Jackets dealt mostly draft picks and prospects for players who can contribute now, and also decided to hang on to a pair of pending free-agent superstars for a playoff run.

The club added top-shelf guys who can contribute now, demonstrating how badly management wants to make a deep playoff push after the first-round knockouts of the past two seasons. They were by far the busiest Metropolitan Division team at the deadline.

The big get was Ottawa star center Matt Duchene, for whom Columbus traded young forward Anthony Duclair, a couple of top prospects and future draft picks on Friday. On Saturday, Duchene's Ottawa linemate Ryan Dzingel was acquired, and goalie Keith Kinkaid and tough-guy defenseman Adam McQuaid were picked up from New Jersey and the New York Rangers, respectively, just before the Monday deadline.

"I think everyone senses they're all in," Dzingel said Monday. "I think the guys in here and me appreciate that, and so do the fans. So it's going to be awesome."

General manager Jarmo Kekalainen also stood pat with elite forward Artemi Panarin and two-time Vezina Trophy-winning goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, both of whom likely will leave for big free-agent paydays after the season. Kekalainen said there were no serious trade offers for those players, and he acknowledged his preference to keep them, anyway, even though both have refused to sign contract extensions with the team.

"People say we used picks and mortgaged our future," Kekalainen said. "And if we traded Artemi Panarin for draft picks, [they'd] say 'they don't want to win now.' So it's just one of those things — you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. But every year is an opportunity to compete, and I feel we have



CHRIS SEWARD/AP

The Blue Jackets acquired tough guy Adam McQuaid, front, from the New York Rangers.

a really good team and this gives us an opportunity to compete for the Stanley Cup."

The new-look Blue Jackets now will have six players with 20 or more goals — the most in the league — distributed among the top three forward lines.

The window has been thrown wide open.

"We're very balanced with four lines, deep, deep in every position," Kekalainen said. "We have enough skill, we have enough scoring. I think we have some power-play skill added now with Duchene, a great faceoff man. So I think we have a lot of ingredients you need to compete."

Coach John Tortorella appeared to be in an (uncharacteristically) ebullient mood on Monday, and that was before the McQuaid trade was announced. "Management has sent a message — we're trying to get better," he said.

MLB

Arenado stays put

Rockies agree to terms with 3B All-Star; source says new deal worth \$260 million

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — Nolan Arenado likes where he's at and the direction the Colorado Rockies are headed.

So he's staying put. For possibly a long, long time. And for a chance to finish what this team has been brewing.

The All-Star third baseman and Rockies agreed to an eight-year contract on Tuesday, and a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press the deal is worth \$260 million. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the dollar value has not been publicly announced.

Arenado's agreement includes a provision that allows him to opt out after three years and become a free agent.

Arenado's \$32.5 million average annual value is the second-highest in baseball history behind the \$34.42 million for pitcher Zack Greinke in a \$206.5 million contract with Arizona that began in 2016. Arenado's deal replaces a \$26 million, one-year contract he agreed to Jan. 31.

Arenado, who turns 28 on April 16, was on track to be eligible for free agency after this season. But there's comfort in remaining at Coors Field, especially in these uncertain days of free agency that have seen Manny Machado unsigned until last week

and Bryce Harper still searching for a team with exhibition games underway.

That hasn't been lost on Arenado, who recently said: "There are some really good baseball players out there, and it is crazy to think some of these teams don't need them. They need them."

The Rockies are trending up after making the postseason in back-to-back seasons, a franchise first. Even more, they nearly captured the team's first NL West title before losing in a tiebreaker at Los Angeles in Game No. 163. The Rockies advanced by beating the Chicago Cubs in the NL wildcard game. They were swept by Milwaukee in the Division Series after hitting 146 against the Brewers and scoring in just one of 28 innings.

New season. A new chapter for a team that's been to the World Series just once — in 2007, when the Rockies were swept by Boston.

Known for his big bat and his highlight-reel plays at third, Arenado has been the face of the franchise for years. He's earned a Gold Glove in each of his six major league seasons. A second-round pick by the Rockies in the 2009 amateur draft, Arenado is a career .291 hitter with 186 home runs, 616 RBIs and an .886 OPS.

In 2018, Arenado batted .297 with an NL-leading 38 homers last season, finishing third in MVP voting.



ERIC SCOTEN/AP

Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado agreed to a \$260 million, eight-year contract with the team on Tuesday, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Obviously, they wanted to keep a homegrown player with them," Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "It's a nice deal for him and a nice deal for the team. So it is good for the game and it makes our job a lot tougher."

This marked the second deal worked out by the front office this week. The team also announced a three-year contract extension for manager Bud Black through 2022.

Over the offseason, the Rockies gave their offense a boost by bringing in Daniel Murphy to play first base. That means Ian Desmond will head to the outfield. They'll

rely heavily on youngsters such as Garrett Hampson, Ryan McMahon or Brendan Rodgers at second base after the departure of DJ LeMahieu to the New York Yankees. Colorado boasts a young rotation led by Kyle Freeland and German Marquez that's filled with promise.

"It's pretty safe to say he makes every team he's on even better," outfielder Charlie Blackmon said in the offseason of Arenado's presence. "I really hope that's with the Rockies for years and years to come."

Marlins take lead in teaching Spanish, English

By STEVEN WINE
Associated Press

JUPITER, Fla. — New Miami Marlins catcher Jorge Alar showed up for the team's first full-squad spring training workout wearing a T-shirt that read, "I talk [trash] about you in Spanish," with a word more pungent and less publishable than "trash."

The Marlins' English speakers are onto him.

At the behest of CEO Derek Jeter, the Marlins last year began Spanish language classes for coaches, and the program has since been expanded throughout the organization, from media relations to analytics to the front office. Now minor league players who speak English are being taught Spanish, while Spanish speakers learn English — part of a trend in Major League Baseball toward more bilingual teams.

"We want to invest in the players outside of their athletic abilities — invest in them as human beings," Jeter says. "Communication is first and foremost when you talk about building a championship-caliber organization, which means making sure our Spanish-speaking players are speaking English, but also our English-speaking players speaking Spanish."

The Jeter regime's education program for minor league players extends beyond language. They're taught life skills and cultural awareness — an asset for



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Marlins pitchers Trevor Richards, right, and Hector Noesi talk during spring training Tuesday in Jupiter, Fla. Last year the Marlins began Spanish language classes for coaches, and the program has also been expanded. Now minor league players who speak English are also being taught Spanish, while Spanish speakers learn English.

youngsters hoping to break into the big leagues in one of the nation's most diverse cities.

The Marlins are not alone. About half of the 30 teams in the big leagues have begun offering Spanish lessons to English-speaking players in the past few years, says Major League Baseball vice president Paul Mifsud, who works with player programs.

"The public focus on what the Marlins are doing has helped to improve both the quality of these kinds of initiatives, and the expediency with which teams are adopting this," Mifsud says. "The

Marlins' industry leadership on this is extremely helpful. We'd like all 30 teams doing their best to get players the level of education they want on these issues, and I think we're heading that direction."

Alfaro's T-shirt was worn in just — he's bilingual, excited about his move to Miami and already a clubhouse leader. But potential cultural divides exist on any team, and the Marlins' education program offers a bridge.

"We're learning about each other," says Gary Denbo, vice president of scouting and player

development. "We address cultural awareness: Why do Latin players listen to their music so loud? Why do American players take it so hard when they go 0-for-4 with the expectations placed on them by their families? Why do some guys talk so loud on the bus?"

"The work our education department is doing affects everything in our players' lives. We cover cooking, shopping, nutrition and how to pay your bills and manage your money."

At the start of spring training, the Marlins held a cooking competition for a group of top minor leaguers. The winning team of outfielder Connor Scott, shortstop Osiris Johnson and pitcher Jorge Guzman celebrated with whoops and high-fives — exactly the kind of scene Marlins officials hope to see more of.

The trio were white, black and Latin, and their chicken and broccoli stir fry reportedly was delicious.

"You've got three guys from totally different worlds," Denbo says. "And when they were announced as the winners, it was like they had won the World Series."

Scott, the Marlins' first-round draft pick last year, says he appreciates the chance to learn about and communicate with another culture.

"The better you know your teammates, the more you trust them," Scott says. "I think that's the biggest they're preaching

here — trust. If you don't trust the guy next to you, how will you trust him to get the runner over, or trust that he's not going to run into you in the outfield?"

Scott says he took no Spanish in high school, but thanks to the Marlins he can now converse in the language. Catcher Will Banfield, a second-round draft pick last year, says he has made progress speaking Spanish when meeting with Latin pitchers, although it's not always as difficult as it might seem.

"Curveball is 'curveball,'" he says. "Slider is 'slider.'"

Still, as he anticipates an eventual promotion to Miami, Banfield says learning Spanish will help him, off the field as well as on the mound.

The Marlins have hired six full-time teachers, plus part-time instructors. Every minor league affiliate will have a teacher this season, and when a team is at home, every player will receive Spanish, English or life skills lessons, according to Denbo.

Marlins veterans applaud the program. Infielder Miguel Rojas, who's bilingual, says improved language skills can ease the transition to the majors, especially in South Florida.

"You're going to jump in an Uber, and that guy is going to speak Spanish," Rojas says. "So these American guys will be prepared with what they're going to face in Miami."

NFL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Replay could go unchanged

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — John Mara hears the cries to change the NFL's replay system. He doesn't think it has the votes.

After the New York Giants owner emerged from the competition committee's annual meeting in Indianapolis, Mara told a handful of reporters he doesn't anticipate significant changes coming to the system, which returned to the league in 1999.

"I just don't see a lot of support to use replay to call penalties. I don't sense a lot of support for the expansion of it, either," Mara said Tuesday. "We're early on, and that might change, but that's my sense of where we are right now. I'm not saying it won't change."

Any rule change requires a 24-vote threshold to pass. Right now, committee members continue to listen to those involved. On Tuesday, it was the game officials. Later this week, it will be the coaches and general managers. In March, the owners will weigh in — and they are the ones with the power to alter the rules.

But no formal proposal or recommendation is on the table.

Fans and many media members have vociferously expressed displeasure with the system since a blown call late in the NFC championship game — officials missed a blatant pass interference penalty and a helmet-first hit by the Rams' Nickell Robey-Coleman deep in Los Angeles territory. The non-



GERALD HERBERT/AP

The Rams' Nickell Robey-Coleman breaks up a pass intended for the Saints' Tommy Lee Lewis during the NFC championship game on Jan. 19. The blown call prompted the NFL's competition committee to discuss the replay system during its annual meeting in Indianapolis on Tuesday but no consensus was reached on changes.

calls helped Los Angeles force overtime and eventually win the game to reach the Super Bowl.

Mara recognizes what repercussions can result from major alterations.

"Are you going to look for one area or check the entire offensive line?" Mara said. "I think you get into a lot of areas with a lot of unintended consequences, and I just don't think there is a lot of sentiment for going in that direction at this point."

"We had a group of officials in there and I don't think there was a lot of support from them about sending it upstairs or sending it to New York."

Atlanta Falcons President Rich McKay, the chairman of the competition committee, noted that supporters of expanding replay could seize on the tide of complaints about the NFC title game. He stressed that the committee will continue to have "healthy discussions" on the subject.

McKay also said the committee is looking into the on-field celebrations that included players

— or even non-players — coming from the sideline.

"So there is some concern about that and it's something I am sure we will put into the book as a reminder," he said of limiting the number of participants in those celebrations.

Feedback on the stricter rules against use of the helmet for hits on opponents has been positive, McKay said.

"We certainly like the numbers that showed up, from an injury standpoint," he said of concussions and helmet-to-helmet hits declining. "It appears the players [learned] and coaches did a good job of teaching, but there is a period of adjustment; these players didn't play with this rule for a long, long time — meaning their entire careers. ..."

"They remain confident that, just like with the defensive player (rule), they will get better at it as they look for it more, and I think we are confident we will see less of these potential fouls because the players will get comfortable with it."

Cowboys' Gregory suspended again

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

Dallas Cowboys defensive end Randy Gregory was suspended indefinitely Tuesday for violating the NFL's substance-abuse policy, the fourth time the troubled player has been banned by the league.

The suspension comes about seven months after Gregory was reinstated by Commissioner Roger Goodell following a lengthy process aimed at reviving his career. Gregory missed 30 of the 32 games over two seasons as a result of his first three suspensions.

Gregory had his best year in 2018, posting career highs with six sacks and 14 games. He was reinstated just before the start of training camp last year and was active for the season opener.

While suspensions in the most advanced stage of the league's substance-abuse policy are at least a year, it wasn't immediately clear how long the 26-year-old Gregory's latest ban would be.

His previous suspension was a yearlong ban, and Gregory waited several months beyond that to submit his case to Goodell in hopes of improving his chances. Several teammates wrote letters supporting Gregory's bid at it.

The Cowboys declined to comment on Gregory's latest suspension, and one of his representatives didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

As with the yearlong ban, Gregory won't be allowed to participate in the Cowboys' offseason program. He can only go to the team's practice facility to meet with the person in charge of his treatment.

Gregory slid to the Cowboys late in the second round of the 2015 draft after testing positive for marijuana at the NFL combine. The former Nebraska standout was considered one of the best pass rushers in his draft, and there was promise early with a strong rookie training camp.

After vowing to owner and general manager Jerry Jones that he could control his issues with marijuana, Gregory only made it through one season. He didn't have a sack as a rookie while missing four games with an ankle injury.

The first suspension, a four-game ban, was announced in February 2016, and he was away from the team during training camp while in rehab. A 10-game suspension came seven months later. Gregory remained with the team while missing those 14 games before playing in the final two games of the 2016 season.

Gregory's yearlong suspension was announced during Dallas' two-week break between the end of the 2016 regular season and a divisional playoff loss to Green Bay. He missed all of 2017.

Briefly

Eagles won't use franchise tag on quarterback Foles

From wire reports

INDIANAPOLIS — Philadelphia Eagles general manager Howie Rosenman says the team will not use its franchise tag on quarterback Nick Foles and instead will let him become a free agent.

Rosenman told reporters Wednesday in Indianapolis the decision came after Foles expressed his desire to become a starter during a recent meeting.

Foles was Carson Wentz's backup each of the past two seasons but finished both seasons as the starter. He was the Super Bowl MVP after leading the Eagles to their first NFL title since 1960 last February. This year, the defending champs lost in the divisional round.

Rosenman said the Eagles were "fortunate" to have a top-15 quarterback mentoring Wentz. Foles was a third-round draft pick in 2012.

In other NFL news:

■ The Minnesota Vikings have exercised their option on coach Mike Zimmer's

contract for 2020.

The Vikings have missed the postseason three out of five times while going 48-34-1, including the playoffs, under Zimmer, with NFC North titles in 2015 and 2017.

Report: Pitch clock could wait

Major League Baseball has reportedly told the players' union it is willing to postpone implementing a 20-second pitch clock until after the current labor agreement expires as part of a broad proposal on rule changes that could alter mound visit restrictions, roster size and more.

Commissioner Rob Manfred has taken an aggressive approach to altering the game's rules to speed up the pace of play and attempt to shoehorn games into three-hour broadcast windows.

The league's latest proposal to the union, first reported by ESPN's Jeff Passan, would further those aims. MLB would institute a pitch clock in 2022, after the collective bargaining agreement runs out at the end of the 2021 season. But the league would force pitchers to face at least three batters and further cut the number of mound visits allowed per nine innings. Such moves would stop managers from turning to pitchers who are right- or left-

handed specialists to face a single batter late in games.

Teams in 2018 were allowed six mound visits per nine innings, plus one visit for each extra inning. In 2019, the league could limit teams to five visits, and four in 2020.

Rosters would also expand from 25 to 26 players, but teams could only carry 13 pitchers.

The players' union is reportedly amenable to many of the proposed alterations, including the unified trade deadline, roster expansion and shorter breaks between innings, giving officials from both MLB and the union hope that the continued talks on rule changes could head off a labor dispute in the coming years.

Mikolas reaches 4-year deal

JUPITER, Fla. — Three days after being announced as the Cardinals opening-day starter, Miles Mikolas agreed to stay in St. Louis much longer.

St. Louis and the All-Star right-hander agreed to a \$68 million, four-year contract covering 2020-23, a deal announced Tuesday that raises his pay to \$7.5 million over the next five seasons.

The 30-year-old is getting \$7.5 million this year as part of a contract he signed be-

fore the 2018 season. He would have been eligible for free agency after this year's World Series.

Nine arrested in doping raids

SEEFELD, Austria — Five elite athletes and four others were arrested Wednesday in doping raids in Austria and Germany amid the Nordic skiing world championships.

Austria's Federal Police Office said the raids targeted "a doping network operating worldwide" and focused on Seefeld, where the championships are taking place. Police said two Austrian athletes were arrested along with one competitor from Kazakhstan and two from Estonia.

One athlete was caught "in the act," the FPÖ's Dieter Csefan said in comments reported by the Austria Press Agency. "He was picked up with a blood transfusion in his arm," Csefan said, adding the alleged doping ring was likely involved in other sports, too.

The athletes arrested weren't named, but two of those arrested were described as cadets in the Austrian police and part of the country's national cross-country ski team. They could now face disciplinary action from the International Ski Federation too.



Foles

NBA/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NBA roundup

Raptors rolls past slumping Celtics

Associated Press

TORONTO — A lack of togetherness is turning into a big trouble for the struggling Boston Celtics.

Pascal Siakam scored 25 points, Kawhi Leonard had 21 and the Toronto Raptors used a huge second quarter to rout Boston 118-95 on Tuesday night.

Marcus Morris scored 17 points, and Jayson Tatum and Terry Rozier each had 11 as Boston lost for the fifth time in seven games. The Celtics are 0-3 since the All-Star break.

"We have to be a lot more connected as a team," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "That's been the theme for a while."

Celtics guard Marcus Smart echoed his coach's assessment. "Nobody is together," Smart said. "We've got to have everybody on the same page doing the same things at the same time."

Celtics guard Kyrie Irving wasn't on the same page when asked about Smart's comments.

"That's Marcus' opinion," Irving said.

Irving also had little to say about Stevens' comment that Boston is taking too many "shortcuts" on defense.

"I don't know," Irving said. "It's up to Brad."

Irving scored seven points. It was his lowest-scoring game since he had three points against Detroit on Oct. 27.

Serge Ibaka scored 14 points and Norm Powell added 11 as Toronto extended its home winning streak over Boston to eight.

Kyle Lowry had 11 assists and Toronto led by as many as 31, turning the game around by outscoring Boston 36-13 in the decisive second.

Knicks 108, Magic 103: Emmanuel Mudiay, Mitchell Robinson and the rest of their team's backups outscored Orlando's starters 75-7, helping New York win its second straight game at home after it dropped 18 in a row at MSG.

The Knicks never led until Robinson's free throw with 2:57 remaining put New York in front 101-100.

Nuggets 121, Thunder 112: Nikola Jokic scored 36 points, including five free throws in the final moments, and host Denver fended off Oklahoma City's late rally in a matchup between two of the top three teams in the Western Conference standings.

Jokic added 10 assists and nine rebounds to finish just shy of his 13th triple-double this season.



Celtics guard Marcus Smart, left, looks for a way past Raptors guard Kyle Lowry as he tries to drive up court during first half on Tuesday.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Toronto	45	17	726
Philadelphia	39	22	639
Boston	37	24	607
Brooklyn	32	30	512
New York	13	48	213

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Charlotte	28	32	467
Orlando	28	34	452
Miami	26	33	441
Washington	24	36	400
Atlanta	20	38	328

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Milwaukee	46	14	767
Indiana	41	19	686
Detroit	29	30	492
Chicago	16	45	262
Cleveland	14	47	230

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Houston	37	25	593
San Antonio	39	29	572
New Orleans	27	35	435
Dallas	26	34	433
Memphis	24	38	387

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Denver	42	18	700
Oklahoma City	37	28	623
Portland	38	26	593
Utah	33	26	559
Minnesota	29	31	483

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
Golden State	43	17	717
L.A. Clippers	34	28	548
Sacramento	31	29	517
L.A. Lakers	28	31	483
Phoenix	22	30	424

Monday's games			
Detroit 113, Indiana 109			
Golden State 121, Charlotte 110			
Portland 123, Cleveland 110			
Brooklyn 101, San Antonio 85			
Phoenix 124, Miami 121			

Tuesday's games			
Houston 110, L.A. Lakers 105			
Milwaukee 117, Chicago 106			
Minnesota 112, Sacramento 105			
Philadelphia 111, New Orleans 110			
L.A. Clippers 121, Dallas 112			

Wednesday's games			
New York 108, Orlando 103			
Portland 110, Boston 107			
Denver 121, Oklahoma City 112			

Thursday's games			
Golden State at Miami			
Minnesota at Atlanta			
Washington at Brooklyn			
Chicago at Memphis			
Portland at Detroit			

Friday's games			
Charlotte at Brooklyn			
Golden State at Atlanta			
Portland at Detroit			
Washington at Boston			
New Orleans at Phoenix			

Saturday's games			
Charlotte at Brooklyn			
Golden State at Atlanta			
Portland at Detroit			
Washington at Boston			
New Orleans at Phoenix			

Sunday's games			
Charlotte at Brooklyn			
Golden State at Atlanta			
Portland at Detroit			
Washington at Boston			
New Orleans at Phoenix			

Milwaukee at L.A. Lakers

FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Knicks 108, Magic 103

ORLANDO — Gordon 8-16-19-26, Isaac 6-13-0-16, Vucetic 12-19-0-26, Fournier 6-16-3-4-15, Augustin 5-10-0-13, Iwundu 1-5-0-0-2, Birch 0-1-1-2-1, Ross 1-10-0-3, Grant 0-0-1-2-1. Totals 39-89-14-20-103.

NEW YORK — Knox 3-16-2-2-8, Thomas 1-1-2-3, Vohles 3-5-0-0-7, Smith Jr. 3-10-2-3, Dotson 2-7-1-1-6, Kornet 0-0-0-0-0, Ellenson 5-11-0-0-13, Robinson 6-5-5-17, Madsen 8-18-5-19, Jenkins 3-5-2-3-8, Trier 4-5-10-18. Totals 38-89-25-108-104.

Oklahoma City — George 7-14-2-8-8, Grant 9-12-1-1-21, Adams 7-12-1-2-15, Westbrook 9-14-8-22, Ferguson 11-23-2-3, Nader 1-1-0-1-2, Noel 3-4-1-3-7, Ma-Morris 2-6-0-0-6, Schroder 5-7-0-0-11, Felton 2-0-0-0-0. Totals 49-85-16-25-111.

DENVER — Barton 9-16-4-4-23, Millsap 4-7-4-6-12, Jokic 11-25-10-13-36, Murray 8-15-0-0-20, Beasley 3-6-0-0-8, Vanderbilt 6-0-0-0-0, Gray 0-0-0-0-0, Lyndon 0-0-0-0-0, Plumlee 1-3-0-0-2, Mo-Morris 2-6-0-0-4, Thomas 3-5-3-11, Harris 0-2-5-6-5. Totals 48-85-28-121.

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Mistakes: Kansas had to yank Agbaji's redshirt

FROM BACK PAGE

With a stacked roster that was rewarded with the preseason No. 1 ranking, the Jayhawks figured they could stash Agbaji on the bench. Let him develop. Have him ready to go when a couple of potential one-and-dones headed to the NBA after this season.

But in an age of 24-hour news services, recruiting-specific websites, AAU all-stars and social media phenomenon, Agbaji is proof that surprises still exist in college basketball.

That mistakes still happen.

You see, the Jayhawks ran into injury trouble earlier this season, losing star big man Udoka Azubuike to season-ending wrist surgery. Defensive stopper Marcus Garrett hurt his ankle, and senior guard Lagerald Vick took a leave of absence, leaving the roster relatively depleted.

And long before any of that took place, Agbaji had proven himself in practice, and a pleasantly horrible realization hit Bill Self that there was no way the kid could sit on the bench.

So when January rolled around, the Hall of Fame coach decided to yank Agbaji's redshirt, and he has been arguably the Jayhawks' best player as they try to pursue another Big 12 title.

He poured in 25 points in a road game against Texas. He scored 23 against Oklahoma State. He had his first double-double in a crucial win over Texas Tech, and his second with 20 points and 11 rebounds while playing 41 minutes in an overtime victory at TCU.

"It was such a poor decision on my part," Self admitted last week. "He went along with it, with his family, thinking he probably wouldn't have very many opportunities to impact us on a gamely basis — not waste age 23 when

you could waste age 18.

"It wasn't that he wasn't good enough to play," Self added. "It was a crowded house and there were no other candidates to not redshirt because the other ones already had. That was it. It didn't have anything to do with him. It was the situation of it being a crowded house."

Buffalo coach Nate Oats, whose team has spent most of the season ranked, nearly redshirted CJ Massinburg when they arrived together in 2015. The athletic guard didn't have many other offers, and Oats acknowledged he didn't really know what he had in Massinburg.

"Going into the fall it was still a real possibility for me," Oats explained last week, "but once we started a real practice I realized that wasn't happening."

Now, Massinburg is poised to leave Buffalo as one of its career scoring leaders.

"I've never actually had one where I started out the year redshirting a kid and then, you know, five, 10 games and decided, 'You know? I screwed up. We've got to play this kid,'" Oats said. "It was a legitimate possibility that we would redshirt CJ when he turned up. And then he ends up scoring 17 at Duke and 36 against Ohio as a freshman. He was pretty good."

Agbaji is proving to be pretty good for Kansas, too.

"He was playing every bit as good as everybody else in practice," Self said, "but we already made that decision to tag him. I actually think he wanted that. He was happy with that. His family was happy with that, because they understood his best ball was well down the road."

AP College Basketball Writers John Marshall and Aaron Beard contributed to this report.



ORLIN WAGNER/AP

Kansas head coach Bill Self realized Oshaji should be on the floor long before he removed Agbaji's redshirt. "It wasn't that he wasn't good enough to play. It was a crowded house and there were no other candidates to not redshirt because the other ones already had. That was it."

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Top 25 roundup

Langford leads IU in 2OT

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Romeo Langford gave Indiana the boost it's been looking for nearly two months.

The freshman guard made the go-ahead layup with under a second to go in the second overtime, and Indiana upset 19th-ranked Wisconsin 75-73 on Tuesday night.

"Finally, I hit one," Langford said after scoring 22 points with seven rebounds. "I know the past two times I had it in my hand at the end of the game and it didn't come out as we planned. I felt like they couldn't stop me getting to the rim. That's exactly what I did and I made the shot."

Langford had 22 points and seven rebounds. Justin Smith had 12 points and six rebounds, and Rob Phinisee and Aljami Durham scored 11 points each for the Hoosiers (14-14, 5-12 Big Ten), who ended a five-game skid in a stretch with losses in 12 of 13 games.

Ethan Happ had 23 points and 11 rebounds, Khalil Iverson had 15 points, and D'Mitrik Trice scored 12 for the Badgers (19-9, 11-6), who had won their five previous games against Indiana and came into Bloomington as 2½-point favorites.

"We knew that they were a better team than what their record shows in the Big Ten," Happ said. "We saw what they were doing earlier in the year. In the Big Ten there's no easy games and they were definitely a hungry team tonight. We were trying to match that, but it wasn't enough in the end."

Langford's basket came after Trice made three free throws to tie the game at 73 with 9 seconds remaining in the second overtime period.

Trice had forced the first overtime with two free throws to tie it at 62 with 5 seconds left in regulation. He later tied it at 68 with a three-pointer, leading to another overtime.

"Good teams make runs," Indiana coach Archie Miller said. "And being able to respond to that in those last four minutes and then in the overtimes, it was great to see that we didn't sort of lay an egg."

Langford provided the spark Indiana needed, scoring nine points after regulation.

No. 4 Kentucky 70, Arkansas 66: Tyler Herro had career highs of five three-pointers and 29 points, including two free throws with five seconds remaining, and host Kentucky rallied from a 15-point deficit.

Out of sorts for 22 minutes, the Wildcats (24-4, 13-2 Southeastern Conference) quickly regrouped



AJ Mass/AP

Indiana guard Romeo Langford, left, shoots and scores next to Wisconsin guard Khalil Iverson, center, and Nate Reivers during the second overtime Tuesday in Bloomington, Ind. Indiana won 75-73.

behind Herro, who finished 5-for-6 from behind the arc and 9-for-10 overall. His long-range baskets 43 seconds apart sparked an 18-3 run over 7:43.

No. 5 North Carolina 93, Syracuse 85: Coby White scored a career-high 34 points and the host Tar Heels pulled away late to beat the Orange.

Cameron Johnson added 16 points for North Carolina (23-5, 13-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), which has won 11 of 12 games and owns its highest AP Top 25 ranking of the season.

Tyus Battle scored 23 of his 29 points after halftime for Syracuse (18-10, 9-6), which shot 48 percent and made 13 of 23 three-pointers.

No. 13 LSU 66, Texas A&M 55: Naz Reid bounced back from his least productive game this season by scoring 18 points and grabbing 11 rebounds, and the host Tigers comfortably beat the Aggies.

Freshman Javonte Smart turned in a second straight productive start in place of ailing point guard Tremont Waters, scoring 17 for LSU (23-5, 13-2 Southeastern Conference), which led by double digits most of the way en route to its 16th victory in 18 games.

Wendell Mitchell scored 14 and Christian Mekowulu had 11 for

Texas A&M (12-15, 5-10).

No. 21 Buffalo 77, Akron 64: CJ Massinburg had 23 points and 10 rebounds to rally the Bulls to their 25th straight home win.

Nick Perkins scored 25 points, and the Bulls (25-3, 13-2 Mid-American Conference) outscored the Zips 14-2 over the final four minutes in a game that featured 12 lead changes. Buffalo has won six straight overall, and its home winning streak is the second longest in the nation behind No. 8 Houston, which has won 33 consecutive.

Tyler Cheese scored 20 points for Akron (15-13, 7-8), which dropped to 2-5 in its past six games.

Ohio State 90, No. 22 Iowa 70: Freshman Justin Ahluwalia scored a career-high 29 points to lead the host Buckeyes past the Hawkeyes.

Kaleb Wesson chipped in 18 points and 11 rebounds for Ohio State, Keyshawn Woods scored 13, Andre Wesson had 11 and Duane Washington Jr. scored 10.

The Buckeyes (18-10, 8-9 Big Ten), fighting to improve their NCAA Tournament chances, got their first win in five tries against ranked teams this season.

Joe Wieskamp had 17 points to lead Iowa (21-7, 10-7), and Tyler Cook added 12 points.

Hokies hand Duke first loss on road

By HANK KURZ JR.

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Ty Outlaw caught a pass from driving teammate Wabissa Bede, set himself and fired away with a tie-breaking three-pointer.

The way No. 20 Virginia Tech executed Tuesday, even Zion Williamson might not have made a difference.

Outlaw hit his big shot with 1:28 left and the Hokies beat No. 3 Duke 77-72 on a night when Williamson, the Blue Devils' star freshman, watched in street clothes for the second straight game because of a sprained right knee.

Bede pulled three defenders toward him as he powered toward the basket, leaving Outlaw completely uncovered.

"I just drove and he was open," a grinning Bede said. "Everybody knows Ty's going to knock that down. He's clutch. Once he let go of it I knew it was going to go in."

Outlaw said most of the credit went to Bede, who has been pressed into extensive point guard duty because the Hokies' floor leader, Justin Robinson, missed his eighth straight game with a left foot injury.

"Even better (than the shot) was the pass from Bede," Outlaw said. "I think he was great tonight, probably one of his best performances, and it couldn't have come at a better time."

Kelly Blackshear Jr. had 23 points and 10 rebounds, and Ahmed Hill scored 17 points for Virginia Tech (22-6, 11-5 Atlantic Coast Conference), which beat Duke at Cassell Coliseum for the third straight time. The Blue Devils (24-4, 12-3) had been the only team in the country yet to lose on the road this season, but Duke hasn't won at Virginia Tech since Feb. 25, 2015.

"They didn't lose tonight," Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski

said of his team. "Virginia Tech won. There's a big difference."

RJ Barrett scored 17 of his 21 points in the second half, but it wasn't enough to keep the Blue Devils from dropping out of a first-place tie with No. 2 Virginia and No. 5 North Carolina in the ACC. Cam Reddish added 17 points as Duke dropped its second in three games, including an 88-72 loss to UNC when Williamson was injured in the opening minute Feb. 20.

"Today they got the better of us," Barrett said.

Krzyzewski said Barrett was sick the entire first half, and "for him to play that way in the second half was remarkable."

The Hokies seemed to have taken control with a 9-2 run to open a 68-61 lead with 4:32 to play, but two free throws by Barrett sparked a 9-2 run for the Blue Devils to knot it at 70 with 1:51 to play. Outlaw's three from the right wing followed, and after Reddish missed at the other end, Nickell Alexander-Walker was fouled and made both free throws for the Hokies. Alexander-Walker had 13 points and six assists.

Trice Jones scored with 12 seconds left, but Blackshear made a pair of free throws with 11.4 seconds left to clinch it.

Buzz love: Hokies coach Buzz Williams has said many times he's not popular enough with his peers to ever win a conference coach of the year award, and he said that he's fine with that, but Krzyzewski was effusive in his postgame praise for his counterpart.

"Buzz has done an amazing job with his team," Krzyzewski said. "Losing Justin and playing this month without him, I don't think there's anybody who's done a better job with his team than he has. Terrific job by him."

Williams is 3-3 in matchups against the Blue Devils.



MATT GENTRY, THE ROANOKE TIMES/AP

Virginia Tech's Ahmed Hill celebrates a Virginia Tech basket against Duke during the second half Tuesday in Blacksburg, Va.

SPORTS



Struggling Celtics

Toronto hands Boston fifth loss in seven games » **NBA, Page 30**



BRAD TOLLEFSON, ABOVE, AND JEFFREY T. BARNES, RIGHT/AP

Above: Kansas' Ochai Agbaji started the year as a redshirt, but Hall of Fame coach Bill Self decided to pull the redshirt when January rolled around and the Jayhawks were depleted by injuries.
Right: CJ Massinburg was slated to be redshirted when he arrived at Buffalo, but his play in practice quickly convinced head coach Nate Oats the Bulls would be better off with him on the court.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Overlooked

Coaches still occasionally commit redshirt mistakes

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan.

Ochai Agbaji is not supposed to happen in the modern era of college basketball.

Not at Kansas. Not really anywhere.

The 6-foot-5 guard's explosive athleticism was supposed to have been uncovered on the AAU circuit by one of the hundreds of scouts and recruiting services. His energetic defense was supposed to have been courted by every blue blood coach. His versatile ability to get to the basket, knock down three-pointers and distribute the ball was supposed to have made him a coveted freshman phenom.

He certainly wasn't supposed to arrive as the least-heralded member of the Jayhawks' recruiting class, and he certainly wasn't supposed to have been so overlooked that he was redshirting.

But that was the plan at Kansas.

SEE MISTAKES ON PAGE 30

Inside:

■ Duke suffers first road loss, Page 31



Moves show Blue Jackets want to win now » **NHL, Page 26**

